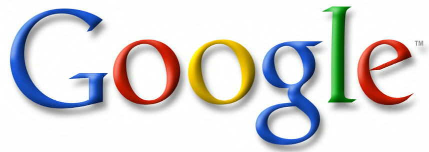

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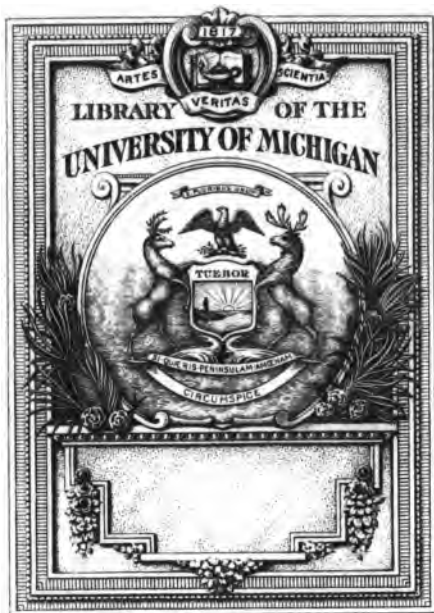

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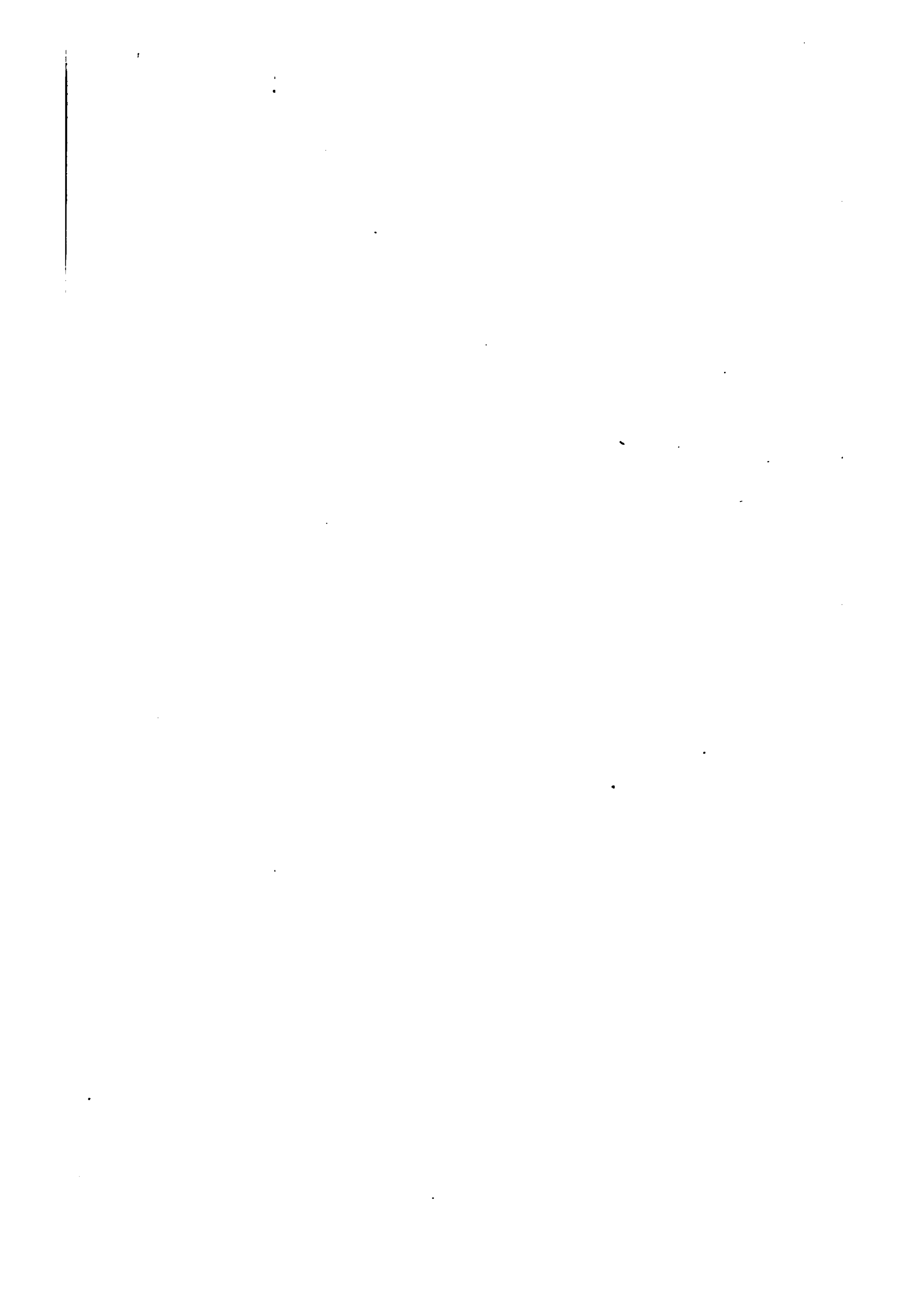

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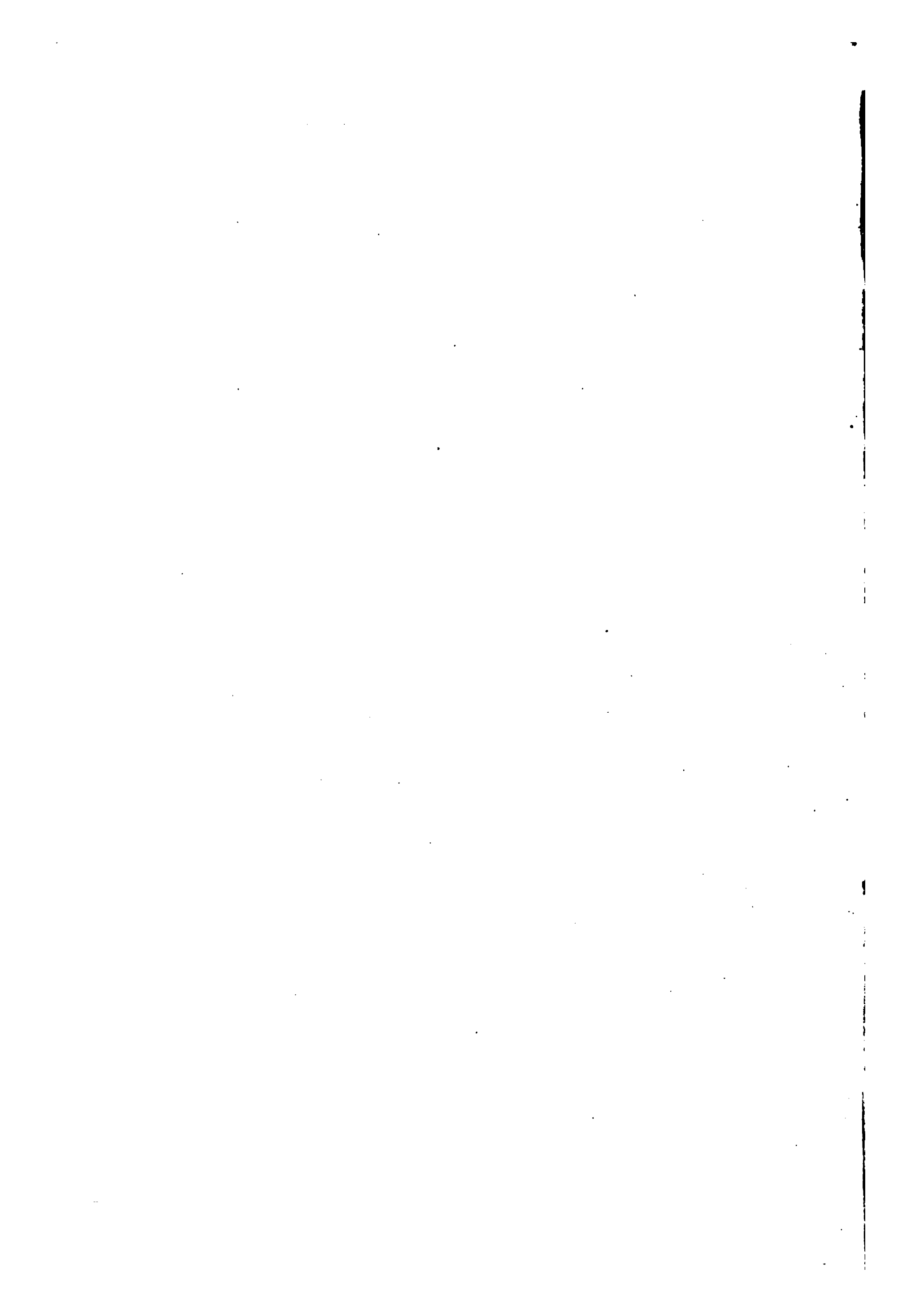
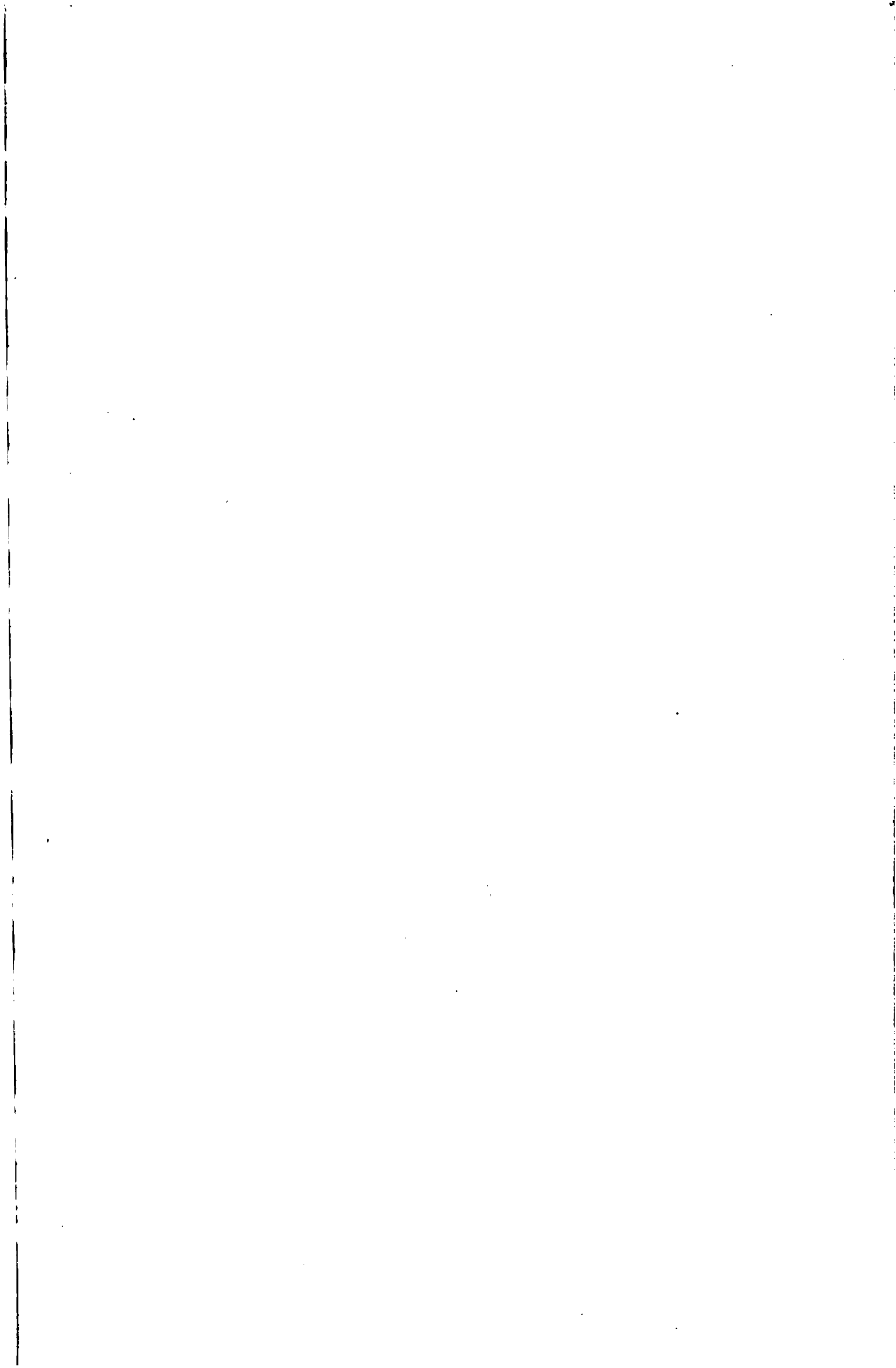


HE BURST THROUGH THE WAVERING LINE OF DEFENDERS.

Page 328 *Frontispiece.*



NORMAN HOLT

A Story of the Army of the Cumberland

BY

General CHARLES KING

AUTHOR OF
"THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "FORT FRAYNE," "UNDER FIRE," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JOHN HUYBERS AND SEYMOUR M. STONE

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NORMAN HOLT

CHAPTER I

CHRISTMASTIDE IN OLD KENTUCKY

Merrily squeaked the fiddles. Merrily rang the rafters with quip and jest and joyous mirth, with the stamp and swing and go of the dance. "Right han' across—now de lef'—dosydo—swing yo' pahdnuhs—all han's roun'," shouted Harkless, black major domo of Belleview, the doctor's famous homestead, and there at the sideboard, ladling out eggnog of his own inimitable composition, from the huge silver bowl that had borne for three generations the arms of the Holts of Surrey—there in dark blue "claw hammer," with flat gilt buttons, in waistcoat of buff nankeen and in snowy-frilled choker, there stood the genial, jovial host himself. In two long lines the dancers advanced, retired, balanced and swung—fair, winsome girls on the one hand, bold, stalwart young gallants upon the other. Along the walls, on divans, sofas, and chairs, gossiped a dozen smiling matrons, a sprinkling of elder beaux. At every door and window were kinky, curly or turbaned heads and wide-opened eyes of dozens of darky

retainers, whose nimble feet beat time incessantly to the stirring music of "Unc' Pomp's" black orchestra.

Three fiddles, a viol, a tambo and bones, all in expert hands, threw into the old tunes of Money Musk and the Virginia Reel a verve and vim and spirit that time and again set even gray heads to bobbing—even veteran, gouty toes to tapping in irresistible sympathy. Festoons, garlands, and wreaths of evergreens draped the walls, windows, and the heavily framed portraits of bygone Holts. Silver flagons and tankards gleamed on mantel and buffet; silver sconces and candelabra, with crystal pendant prisms, and bristling with wax candles, shone and jingled on mantel, wall, and sideboard. Colored, opalescent lights glowed in dim recesses among the greens, glass and gourd both furnishing the inclosing spheres. Foxes' masks grinned above the broad fire-places, where the coals of famous hickory logs were still alive. Foxes' brushes, hunting caps, crops, whips, and spurs hung here and there upon the wall. Red-berried, sharp-spined, dark-leaved holly stood pert and prim in every nook and corner, while from the cross beams overhead in the very center of the big bay-windowed room hung a single spray of paler, ashen green, amid whose curling leaves peeped tiny globes of creamy white, a sprig that vested the place beneath with strange and thrilling interest, a spot to be coyly shunned by every maid and eagerly sought by every man who knew the saving grace of the thrice-blessed mistletoe, and brilliant were the device and stratagem by

which each sought to lure unthinking damsel within the enchanted limits, there to claim and take forfeit of her forgetfulness, for these were the ante-bellum days in the borderland of the sunny South, this was an evening in the blithe Christmas holiday season, and in an old Kentucky home.

And yet, long after eleven at night, only twice, despite the dangers of the dance, had damsel been fairly caught, and for those two, Lorna Walton, a brilliant belle from Louisville, was rightly chargeable, for her gown was a creation to which Kate Ray of Lexington gave more thought than any man in the room could claim. She was gazing at this, thinking only of this, when suddenly swung beneath the enabling parasite and summarily kissed by Henry Holt, the doctor's eldest son. That she was shamed, stung and startled, for the room resounded with applause and laughter, helped her not one whit. She flew at him with blazing cheeks and eyes and furiously threatening little hands, but he was long and lithe and an expert dodger. "Ah'll pay you some day, Mistuh Harry Clay Holt," had to be her sole satisfaction for the time being. Nor was she mollified when, hardly twenty minutes later, and possibly through the same cause, pretty Lou Ward was trapped and pinioned and, despite frantic struggles, fairly kissed by a comparative stranger at Belleview. It wouldn't have been so bad, said Miss Lou, had it been one of her own set, because Kentuckians are always, or nearly always, cousins, and if not, have known each other so long and well "they are

just as good as related." "But this Mr. Malloy," said Lou, "isn't one of us at all. Besides, anybody can see—any girl at least—that what brought him to Belleview was no Kentucky girl. It was Miss Lane from across the Ohio."

And Miss Lane was a damsel many a man would have followed further, a maid many a man would be pardoned for singling out, even in the midst of a bevy of Kentucky women on their native heath. She was above the middle height, slender, yet with rarely rounded form. Her hands and feet were long and slim and exquisitely moulded. Her hair was almost a chestnut brown, soft, shimmering and gloriously abundant, but her face was one no man could look at and forget—oval, delicately chiseled, with the softest curves and merriest dimples. Her eyes were radiant, of deepest blue, shaded by long, dark, curving lashes and overarched by thick, heavy brows of deeper brown than her glossy hair. The nose, straight and small, one never seemed to see simply because of the beauty—the witching beauty—of the soft, sweet mouth, between whose red portals gleamed two rows of snowy, faultless teeth. Set such a head on a full rounded neck, above pretty, sloping shoulders, all dazzling white, and there is witchery enough to compel the regard of an anchorite, if ever such a being existed, and to try the asceticism of St. Anthony.

This night, even in that roomful of borderland beauty, she moved in girlish triumph, the belle of a Kentucky ball, and the fair young face was flushed with the consciousness of her power.

Barely seventeen, without a care in the world, brimful of health, content and gladness, the idol of a proud father, the joy of a devoted mother, she lived and moved as though smiles and sunshine only could light her pathway, as though sin and sorrow had no place on earth, no lodgment in the hearts of those that hung about her.

Barely seventeen, reveling in the delights of a pretty girl's first season, she had come with her parents to be the guest of the master of Belleview at this charmed holiday season, and to help celebrate the return of Norman, his younger son. The friendship between the elders was of long standing. Hot-headed, impulsive, often at fault, Dr. Holt was none the less beloved by a wide and ever-widening circle, despite the fact that his occasional quarrels had overrun the borders of his chosen state and overflowed into Ohio. McIntyre & Lane, attorneys and counselors at law, had long been his closest associates outside the limits of his own commonwealth. The wife of his youth and middle age, his devoted helpmeet, the fond mother of his stalwart boys, was McIntyre's only sister, and all Kentucky knew the stanch old squire doctor would never take another in place of her who for seven years had been sleeping in the peaceful churchyard close at hand. A sister, the widow of a gallant soldier who fell at Buena Vista, came and kept house for him the year after his treasure was taken away, though for many moons he had fiercely repelled the idea of having any one. Time, high health, and the demands of his profession and his neighbors had gradually

restored the old geniality and kindliness, but the balance wheel, the gentle monitor and guide that so often and so long had curbed the impetuous will and unreasoning impulse, was sorely missed. In more ways than one the proud, high-mettled old gentleman had fallen into error since her demise, and the latest and worst instance was in the case of Norman—Norman McIntyre as she had fondly named him for her beloved father—Norman whom she had loved with a tenderness unspeakable—Norman for whom, despite all his pride in his first born—young "Harry of the West"—the hot-headed sire seemed to hold in especial favor—Norman, whose chosen career he had practically closed.

The story was already all over Kentucky, though hardly a fortnight old. The lad, in his twenty-first year, was at West Point, standing well up in his class and wearing the chevrons of a cadet sergeant. Eighteen months more would graduate and establish him for life in an honorable profession for which he was eminently fitted, when he fell out with a senior, a cadet lieutenant of his company and, after the manner of the corps, challenged and fought his adversary, who, in truth, had been the aggressor and had used his official position to vent a personal spite. There was a girl at the bottom of it all. There generally is. The sympathy of the battalion, almost to a man, was with the Kentuckian, but, as ill luck would have it, the affair was brought to the attention of the commandant in a way he could not ignore. The regulations were explicit and

courtmartial had to come. The finding was guilty, the sentence dismissal, but it was coupled with the unanimous recommendation of the court for clemency, based on "high character and soldierly record," and the Secretary of War commuted it to confinement to barracks for a brief period and the loss of his sergeant's chevrons. Everybody felt confident that when June came around Norman Holt's name would again stand high on the list of cadet officers. Norman himself knew that he had gotten off easily. It was the old doctor who went wild in his wrath, who had hurried on to Washington, and thence to the Point, arguing, denouncing, raging. Regulations be damned, said he: in an affair between gentlemen the only regulations governing the case were those of the code, which every Kentuckian, every Southerner, every man except a base-born mudsil, must recognize. His son had been put upon and insulted by a fellow cadet, no matter what his battalion rank, and had simply acted as a gentleman in demanding reparation. "I'd have disowned him if he hadn't. He served the scoundrel perfectly right, suh."

The doctor looked for triumphant acquittal. He would have considered even official commendation only right and proper under the circumstances. He listened in amaze to the order promulgating the findings and sentence, and then, in an outburst of rage, ordered his son to write instantly his resignation, and Norman, smarting under the lash of the implied reprimand, yet secretly reluctant and doubting, obeyed the fa-

ther's mandate. In vain did the commandant, himself a gallant and distinguished Southerner, try to reason with the irate Kentuckian. Holt would have fought Hardee right then and there, and only a limited few at the officers' mess were aware how narrowly a meeting was averted.

They got the fire-eating physician away from the Point and "on to Washington," where, rabid old whig that he was, he more than relished the opportunity of having it out with the Virginia Democrat who signed the order that swept the chevrons from Norman's sleeve. A man of mark and influence was Dr. Holt in the border states, but Kentucky and Tennessee, by presenting candidates of their own for the Presidency in the momentous election just decided, had defeated the party to which they were naturally allied, and, to the wrath of the South, had opened the doors of the White House to a rank abolitionist, "an obscure rail splitter," "a son of the soil, who sprang from a hovel." Holt went to denounce and upbraid, but found a Cabinet that could outdo him at both. He was stunned by the reproaches of the President's backers and advisers.

The President himself he could not see at all. He found that for the first time in national history Kentucky was not a name to conjure with at Washington. The border states had betrayed and knifed the great Democratic party, was the cry, and turned the nation over to the nigger worshiper. The doctor wanted to fight Floyd, the War Secretary, but found the capital full of amazed and disgusted statesmen, in whose mouth

the very names of Kentucky and Tennessee were opprobrium. Kinsmen of rank and influence surrounded the wrathful borderer and whisked him away, taking Norman with him.

The second week in December found him home again, and, forgetting for a time at least, his bitter rage in the joys of hospitality. Then Belleview was thrown wide open for the holidays. Norman should be welcomed by the prettiest girls to be found in the West, and Norman should be hailed henceforth as a Kentucky gentleman and no starving subaltern in the army of an obnoxious government. Holt had retired from practice three years before, young Dr. Woodrow succeeding to the good will and the bad debts. Holt had inherited wealth, a beautiful home and estate. He had a dozen hunters, dogs by the score, and he hardly knew just how many Ethiopians—he never spoke of them or treated them as slaves. He had his boys, Hal studying law with McIntyre & Lane at Cincinnati, and Norman—well, "Norman should have a few months' rest, after the years of iron-clad idiocy they called discipline at that infernal pauper school on the Hudson." He should look about him and take his choice of a profession. He should go to college, read law, or study medicine, or stay at home and hunt, ride, shoot, and be the young squire. But before they had been home a week the fond, hot-headed old father had seen beyond all peradventure that the boy was already repenting his action and pining to be back at the Point.

Never in his life had Norman been happier, de-

spite the monotonous routine, than in the autumn days just gone by, when, on battalion drill or dress parade, he marched as left guide of the left flank company, wherein every Kentuckian in the corps seemed to find his soldier station. They rode together for hours each day, father and son, and by every means in his power did the doctor strive to reconcile the boy, and to divert his thoughts. Norman rode, as do so many Kentuckians, as though born to the saddle, but he couldn't be in the saddle forever. The long winter nights were on them now, and there were hours when he could mourn unseen. Holt noted, and thought, and acted. The jollities he had planned for Christmas night were all well enough, but something had to be done at once. Old friends were the Waltons of Louisville, the Rays of Lexington, and they were begged to come without delay, and come they did, and much they made of Norman, but there was small chance for sentiment—there seldom is where lad and lassie have been chums from early childhood. Lorna and Lou had romped, played tag, and ridden double with him time and again, and were too near his own age. Loyally the boy welcomed them and paid homage to them, but every Kentuckian would do that. They were in saddle every morning. They chased the fox by day and danced by night, but when the girls and their mamas had gone to bed and the doctor would fain have taken his boy to his heart and probed his soul in search of symptoms of reviving content, Norman would steal away, but not to sleep, for Holt could hear him moving

restlessly about his room, and well he knew what that meant.

And this was the state of things at the opening of Christmas week, and then came the Lanes from Cincinnati, and then a change. Duty as host demanded of the son that he should neglect none of his father's guests—that even old chums like Lorna and Lou should have just as much of his time and attention as those who were later arrivals. The old-fashioned hostelry in the village, too, was filled with friends who could not be housed under even the spreading roof of Belleview. Henry's room was given over to Mr. and Mrs. Lane, and he had doubled up with Norman. The register of the Asholt inn was filled with names the nation knew and all Kentucky loved. Holt and his stalwart sons had every moment occupied, and the father noted with joy the passing of the shadow that fate, not he, had thrown about his younger hope, his pride, his little Benjamin. It was half a week before he fathomed the explanation, and then he hailed it in exultation and rejoicing. One thraldom had succeeded another. The bondsman to soldier servitude of the months gone by had surrendered to a new commander; all dreams of military honor and glory were banished by one overpowering dream of love. The lad, almost from the moment of her arrival, had met his fate in Daisy Lane.

Judge McIntyre had been unable to join them. Cares had multiplied upon the senior partner with advancing years, and his health had suffered. Lane, the junior, young still and vigorous, felt a

secret anxiety as to his friend and helper, for such had McIntyre ever been. He owned to Holt he hated to come away and leave the elder man, but the Judge had insisted. McIntyre's investments had gone wrong, said Lane, and he was brooding, worrying a great deal.

"I'll go up and see him after the New Year," answered the doctor, heartily, "and take Norman for a look into Cincinnati society," and he wondered that Lane should say so little to support the plan. He wondered more that afternoon at Lane's evident surprise and even disapprobation over the coming of a new claimant on the doctor's hospitality. Old Harkless entered the library where the two were seated in earnest chat and, bowing with great dignity, presented on a silver salver a letter to his master.

"Why, this is from Mac, now!" said Holt, as he scanned the superscription under his spectacles. "Introducing Mr. J. Burnett Malloy. I don't like that new-fangled way of dividing a name. Let's see," he added, as he drew forth the inclosure. "'This will be handed you by Mr. Burnett Malloy, son of my esteemed friend, the Hon. T. M. Malloy, state Senator, one of our foremost men and influential citizens. The young gentleman is visiting Kentucky, and, as he will have a day or two at Asholt, I bespeak for him the welcome you would accord to me and mine.' Where's his card?" And the doctor picked up the square pasteboard. "Glazed!" he exclaimed. "Where'd he learn that *bourgeois* business? Mr. J. Burnett Malloy! Staying at the inn, is it? Well, Harkless,

tell Marse Henry I want him. We'll call and bid Mr. Malloy to dinner. Know him, Lane?"

But Lane was already on the move for the door. He stopped, half-turned, colored, hesitated, and then spoke.

"Yes—that is, slightly. I wish Mac didn't know them at all."

CHAPTER II

A MIDNIGHT SUMMONS

And yet he was a very presentable young man, well garbed and groomed, who came instantly to meet his callers at the inn. The doctor had had no opportunity to draw from Lane the reasons for his reluctance. Henry had come at once in obedience to his father's message, and, while Norman and the other young knights were galloping through the forest aisles with Belleview's fair guests, the father and elder son had driven into Asholt, close at hand, to honor the Judge's note. Henry had met both Malloys, the state Senator and his heir, yet knew them only slightly. The former, he said, was frequently closeted with Judge McIntyre. The latter belonged to a young and lively set, with whom Henry had little in common. Henry was studious and ambitious, was not a society man, and so appeared but seldom at the blithe gatherings for which the Queen City in those days was famous. Young Malloy had traveled abroad—something few Americans could say two generations ago—and had abundant means and fair manners. The elder struck Henry as being coarse and pushing, but polish was not to be looked for in the professional politician. Henry was not in the confidence of

Mr. Lane, and, therefore, could not say how he regarded the Malloys, but thought it possible the junior partner disapproved of the son, on general principles, as a possible suitor, for Henry remembered having heard that young Malloy was deeply smitten with Daisy's beauty. And then came the youth himself to greet them and to accept, with evident pleasure, the doctor's cordial bid to dinner that evening.

"Sorry we haven't a room for you at Belleview, suh," said the Kentuckian, "but the women folk are there in force, and several of our guests have to put up here. If they give you a comfortable bed it's all you need. We expect you to spend your waking hours with us."

Mr. Burnett Malloy, in expressing his thanks, displayed much gratification and a fine set of teeth. He arrived just exactly at the appointed hour and appeared in black evening dress, which at that time was rarely seen in the West or South, most men wearing a frock coat and shirt collars of remarkable pattern, and not a few still appearing in the frills and wristbands that had been the mode of a much earlier day. Mr. Malloy was taken round the circle by the beaming host and presented individually to every man and woman, old or young, in the big, low-ceilinged, old-fashioned drawing-room, and, after the kindly manner of the day, by men and women both, he was greeted with a cordial handshake. Mr. and Mrs. Lane were civil, were courteous, yet somewhat constrained and distant. Daisy gave him a swift glance from her soft blue eyes, a faltering

hand and colored to the brows as she met his gaze, and this, too, despite the fact that her mother had warned her of his coming.

"Did you have any intimation, Daisy?" Mrs. Lane had asked, as they were dressing for the late dinner, and the child had fought in vain against that telltale flush as she answered:

"He said last week, that—business might bring him to Asholt."

It so happened that at the moment of Malloy's entry Norman Holt was in an adjoining room—the library—with Miss Ray and her mother. Wax candles by the score filled the drawing-room with soft, yet brilliant, light, while the library seemed in shadow. The Rays were full of interest and sympathy in Norman's West Point life—there was a lad at home whose whole ambition was to win a cadetship—and they were listening in absorbed attention to his description of barrack days, when suddenly he saw their eyes wander to the other room, and then almost instantly, in surprise, and surely not in pleasure, seek each other. There was something so significant in the glance that passed between mother and daughter that Norman turned instinctively to note the cause, and turned just in time to see two forms in the conventional evening garb of two distinct epochs—his father in the blue, gilt-buttoned swallow tail, the presentable young stranger in the solemn black, with white, ecclesiastical-looking tie. It was at the instant when Mr. Malloy was bowing low over Daisy Lane's half-extended hand, it was the instant when that telltale blush suffused her lovely

face, and, looking back from her to him, the jealous eyes of the young soldier noted unerringly the eager, joyous, almost impassioned gaze of the newcomer. He could think of nothing else, when, a moment later, at his father's summons, he, too, extended a welcoming hand to the unheralded, yet evidently expected, stranger. The eyes of the two met in a straightforward, steady gaze, the soft, dark brown of the Kentuckian, the steely gray of the guest, and the hands seemed at first to miss each other, somehow, and when they met, the sturdy clasp of the Northerner found only faint response.

Then Harkless threw open the folding doors, and with his elaborate bow announced that dinner was served. Then the doctor, blithely saying, "Give your arm to Miss Lane, Mr. Malloy," gave his to Mrs. Lane, and Norman fell in toward the rear of the column, escorting Lorna Walton, deaf even to her joyous prophecy of a splendid run for the morrow.

It was a splendid run. The day had been superb—fine, clear, and with a frosty rime that lent exhilaration to every hour in the open air. And now Christmas eve had come and a second dance and even a larger gathering. Time and again during this evening that followed the "splendid run" of the day, laughing girls and gallant men found themselves comparing notes and going over and over again the stirring events of the chase.

Whether because he had grown unusually wary, thanks to such frequent hunting, or because of

the nipping frost, Reynard had proved a teaser. Hounds, huntsmen, and the merry party had run long miles in vain, and as some brooks were broad, some fences far too high for all but the most daring and skillful, it had resulted that "the field" split up into a dozen little parties dispersed all over the country. It followed that toward three in the afternoon, when almost all the riders had returned to Belleview, there were still four guests abroad. Hounds and huntsmen, bedraggled and disappointed, had come trotting back by an hour after noon. The elder women, who had driven out in open carriages to see what they could of the sport, had long since returned to the solace of tea. Miss Walton and a cousin, Louisville girls, had ridden in with Henry Holt and Mr. Goodloe, just ahead of the hounds. Norman, guiding Lou Ward by a short cut across the fields, had reached home earlier still, and was striding about the premises from gate to stables, still in riding dress, and obviously nervous and fretful. Four of the party only were missing, but, had it been only one, and that one Margaret Lane, so far as Norman was concerned the rest had returned in vain. At one o'clock a belated darky huntsman reported that he had seen Marse Blanton and Miss Ray at the ford of the middle branch. Miss Ray's horse had cast a shoe and they would stop at Sparrow's to have another set. That would account for them. But who had seen Miss Lane and Mr. Malloy?

Unaccustomed to cross-country riding, though a graceful horsewoman, Daisy had refused a broad

jump early in the day, and taken to the highway. Norman at that time was well in the lead, guiding Kate Ray, who "rode like a bird." Malloy, it was observed, though a fair rider, and sitting one of the best hunters in the Belleview stables, seemed to care little for any honors of the chase that might separate him from the girl whose beauty so entranced him. He, too, flinched at a ditch his hunter could have cleared at a bound, and cantered away to place himself again at Daisy's side. From that hour they were lost to the rest of the hunt, and practically to the world. Not a soul had seen them. There were thick woods along the Middle Fork, and a labyrinth of cattle trails and bridle paths, but the one fox that drew the long stern chase seemed to scorn the cover of those nearby copses, and had led on like a rocket, straight for the spire at Hardin Hill, nearly nine good miles to the north. Branching from the pike, a country road bore away for the hills, and as the chase was in plain view, it was but reasonable to suppose the pair had followed, yet men and women who took that route declared to the contrary. Was it possible, then, that, preferring to be alone, they had deliberately chosen the byway that led to the long belt of forest. Mrs. Lane was looking anxious and annoyed when after luncheon she came out and joined Norman at the gate. Mr. Lane was eager, she said, to mount and go forth in search of them. It was this that determined Norman Holt. "Tell him I'll go, and at once," said he. "They have possibly got bewildered in Buford

Wood." His fresh horse was ready, and he was away in less than three minutes. They heard him winding his hunting horn, faint and fainter, as he sped northeastward, and that was all until nearly six, when the watchers saw the trio coming slowly in together, Norman afoot.

Not until they reached the door were matters understood. Daisy, white one minute and flushed the next, was riding Norman's horse. Malloy, plausible and smiling, was explaining what had happened, and Norman, without a word to anybody, was leading to the stables Daisy's pretty mare, which had gone suddenly, unaccountably, pitiably lame.

There had been a scene, it was believed, between Mrs. Lane and her charming daughter the instant they reached the seclusion of their room. Daisy had slipped out of saddle even before Mr. Malloy could leap from his and assist her to dismount. With flaming cheeks she had hurried up the steps to the broad, colonnaded portico, forcing a smile for the benefit of the women thronging to meet her, yet hastening past them to her mother who stood waiting at the library door, where she had been in anxious conference with the doctor, and at once led her child to the stairway. Not until late in the evening did Daisy reappear. Dinner had been sent to her that she might rest and be in readiness for the event of the holiday season—the Belleview ball.

But they had been dancing over an hour before she came down, and every woman present knew she had been weeping. Norman, too, despite the

demands upon him as host, was far from being his usual self—was fitful, nervous, absentminded. Malloy, however, seemed thoroughly at his ease, buoyant and debonair, dancing assiduously with one girl after another, and striving to be agreeable to all—to all at least until Daisy's late appearance. The thing that observant women could not fail to note was that Norman Holt never once addressed him during the entire evening, and spoke only awkwardly and with cold constraint, when compelled to answer his remarks. It was long after ten o'clock when Mrs. Lane and her daughter joined the party in the ball-room. The mistletoe bough still hung conspicuously and threw its potent spell on all beneath, but maids and matrons were shy and guarded now, and mindful of the previous eve.

There had been fun illimitable over Kate Ray's capture. She was one of the most popular girls in all Kentucky, and men and women both were her frank, devoted friends. There had been laughter and what might be called polite applause when pretty Lou Ward was fairly trapped by the stranger within their gates, and, taken utterly by surprise, was most respectfully but palpably kissed by that well-groomed, well-mannered young man. Lou herself hardly knew whether to laugh or cry. It was at herself, or her "own stupidity," she was most incensed, not so much at him. Yet, even in the holiday season, and under the mistletoe, wasn't it—impudent? Even if he had caught her fairly, which she denied, he should not really have kissed her, said Lou. He should only have—made be-

lieve. That's what a Kentucky gentleman would have done. "Isn't Henry Holt a Kentucky gentleman?" asked Mrs. Walton, laughing, for she had her doubts as to the limitation thus ascribed to the guild. "I don't remember that he spared Kate."

Miss Ward pouted in high dudgeon. She was not good at argument. She found little or no sympathy until she happened to catch sight of Kate Ray, and all that young lady would admit was that Mr. Malloy was a man who never neglected opportunities. It developed that Kate had met Mr. Malloy when visiting Cincinnati, and further, without so saying, she had impressed Miss Ward with the belief that Mr. Malloy was no favorite, or even friend. So, this second evening, an odd feeling seemed to be growing up against that business-like, energetic young man from the Buckeye state, even when many people were speaking admiringly of his visibly good points to that most courteous of hosts, the doctor. As Belleview's guests, they seemed to find it incumbent on them to assure their entertainer how much they saw to remark in the only man not Virginia or Kentucky bred thus bidden to meet them—a rather significant symptom that there might be points that possibly called for explanation.

And one of these was the long disappearance of the stranger guest that morning, when in company with and responsible for one of the youngest and loveliest of the assembled party.

With every appearance of frankness, with every

expression of proper regret, he had told the story to man after man, and to the women who witnessed their return—told it practically as he had told it to Norman, when that keen young scout and rider came upon them in the depths of the Buford Wood. He declared he had heard the distant bay of the hounds coming from over the treetops, indicating that Reynard had turned sharply eastward when near Hardin Hill, and, in his inexperience, as he frankly said, he reasoned that the fox was now making for the woods. Why not ride directly thither, and be foremost in the hunt? Miss Lane evidently longed to be up at the front again, but could not take the higher fences. He persuaded her to gallop, as he said, in the direction of the sound, and away from the trailing field. But once within the wood the bridle path became crooked, narrow, intricate. The sounds were deadened, and in less than half an hour he found himself bewildered. Then, in crossing a shallow ditch, Miss Lane's pretty mount strained her off hind leg in some mysterious way, and, evidently in great pain, could not set the hoof to earth. Malloy found a seat for his partner on a fallen log, and followed a path to the open fields to the north, hoping to see something of the hunt, but succeeded only in hailing a negro who promised to go at once to Belleview, seven miles away, and bring the phaeton for Miss Lane. Then he rode back to her and waited—waited long hours—and strove to comfort her by the assurance that aid must soon come. Not until nearly four did they hear the mellow notes of a

hunter's horn winding through the forest, and Malloy's shout in answer brought Mr. Holt to their retreat, and Mr. Holt could tell the rest. It seems that Mr. Holt had stripped off the saddles, reset Miss Lane's on his own fresh horse, and started them home, while he followed afoot, leading poor hobbling Nellie Gray. It was most unfortunate, but nobody, said Malloy, was to blame except himself, the narrator, unless it was the darky field hand whom he had liberally tipped to induce him to go with all speed to Belleview. It is easy to shift blame to black shoulders, yet it was pointed out to Mr. Malloy that the policy of wisdom was never to pay an Ethiopian in advance: he was apt to spend the money and have his fling before giving heed to his errand. But the answer was prompt: The negro wished to hire a mule, and could not without money, which was how the guileful bondman secured his fee in advance.

To his father's guest Norman would make no sign of the suggestion that occurred to him on the spot. The negro must have been an alien and a stranger who could not get a mule to ride to hospitable Belleview. There wasn't a darky within a radius of a dozen miles that wouldn't jump at the chance of going, even afoot, for never came messenger, black or white, to Belleview's gates that went away unblessed, unfilled. Aunt Chloe's kitchen was famous for its good cheer—famous as the doctor's sideboard. The story about the messenger might be true, but there was one man too bitter and too jealous to believe it, yet too

true a son of his father and of his state to express doubt of his father's guest.

Through a maze of narrow tracks and crooked trails young Holt had led them to the light, Malloy talking volubly, Miss Lane silent and disturbed. Once in the open, southward fields Norman pointed out cross-country roads for them to follow through various plantations and estates, and bade them gallop on, but again did the Cincinnatian take the wrong turn, and a twenty minute detour. Again did the trio come together, Daisy by this time almost tearful, but Malloy as buoyant as ever. Again did Norman start them on the short cut to the pike, and wave them on, grimly setting his teeth and towing poor, limping Nellie through the stubble, but now, who knows what wayward impulse seized upon the girl! Was it to punish one lover or to encourage another? Miss Lane declared herself too tired to gallop, and half distrustful of her escort's topographical sense. "I'm not going to lose the road again," said she in so many words. "I mean to stay right here by Mr. Holt. If you are in a hurry, Mr. Malloy, ride home and tell them we're coming."

Long, long afterward did she recall that ill-considered speech, and the effect it had on each. Malloy's keen face turned almost white, and a strange glitter leaped into his steely eyes. Norman Holt flushed to the very brows, but for a moment neither spoke. Malloy gazed out over the rolling landscape to where Belleview's tower was glittering in the slanting sunshine, until he had

steadied himself a moment, then calmly enough replied: "I'm not skilled in backwoods tricks. Perhaps it will be just as well to take no more chances."

"Why, I believe Mr. Holt could guide us home if it were pitch dark," impetuously spoke the lady. "Couldn't you, Mr. Holt?"

"I have guided a lost party to Belleview on a black night," was the reply. "You see, I've known these trails almost from babyhood. I dare say if I had to I could do it again."

She was thinking of that homeward ride, and of Norman's words, and not of Malloy or of his exploit of the previous evening—the ravished kiss that Miss Ward was so lamenting. She sat there by her mother's side, strange contrast to the girl who had been so radiant the night before, refusing now every invitation to dance. She was still tired, she declared, and unaccountably stiff and sore. She had been so little in the saddle since the spring. "If you dance to-night with one," her mother had said, "you cannot refuse others, and Mr. Malloy will be sure to ask for all you can possibly give him." Daisy was playing wall-flower, a rôle to which she was utterly unaccustomed, but men swarmed about and persisted in their importunities, especially Malloy. Norman Holt alone did not repeat his request for a dance. Even as midnight approached, the hour at which all were to join in one cup of wassail to the honor of Father Christmas, there were men who hovered about her chair and begged that she reconsider. Seeing this, with an odd,

semi-possessive manner, Malloy placed himself at her side, and, despite averted looks and a decidedly cold shoulder, hung there undauntedly, a sort of single-headed Cerberus, warning off all comers until the midnight hour chimed from the old Dutch clock in the broad hallway, when, glasses in hand, the whole assemblage gathered about the glad, genial host.

There were men that night who spoke of it before they sought their rooms, and thought of it again and again in the years that followed. Never had the master of Belleview seemed in blither, gayer mood, his ruddy face wreathed in smiles, his kindly eyes twinkling in joy and hospitality and benediction on all around him. Even the servants had been summoned in, Harkless at their head, and in broad black circle, turbaned poll and kinky crown encompassed round about the bevy of fair women and brave men. To each was given a brimming glass of the doctor's famous mixture. Its fragrance arose to the very rafters, and then all other sounds were hushed as the doctor, beaming on them, lifted up his glass and voice. Only three days before had come the startling news that South Carolina, spoiled and petted child of the family of states, had declared all bonds annulled, all ties severed, and proclaimed her secession from the Union. No man could tell to what it might lead. No thinking man could fail to see that, grave and momentous, a crisis had come in the onward sweep of our national life. Even here, in the midst of all the Christmas joys at Belleview,

there had been grave faces among the few elders, but to-night the old doctor's was unclouded.

"Friends and kindred," he began, "old friends and new, good friends all:—So long as I have lived here in the heart of our beloved commonwealth has it been the boast of Belleview that no living soul, white or black, failed of welcome and of our good cheer on this thrice blessed anniversary. Peace on earth, good will to men, has been the motto over our hearthstone from the day these doors were opened. Peace on earth, good will to men, remains its watchword to-day, and such, please God, shall be its watchword through generation after generation long after I am laid beneath the sod. We rejoice, my sons and I, in your presence here to-night. We pledge you with full hearts and brimming glasses. We drink to Christmas past, to Christmas present, and to Christmas to come. May another year bring us all—all who are here to-night—again within these walls, then as now, to drink to each other's health and peace and happiness, and to say, in the words of Tiny Tim, God bless us, every one."

The moment that followed, first of murmurous applause, then of silence as glasses were raised to answering lips, was rudely closed. Sudden and imperative, somebody was knocking at the outer door.

CHAPTER III

A DRIVE IN THE DARK

When Harkless returned it was to summon Dr. Holt to the hall. The chat and laughter seemed to have died away. There is something grewsome in a midnight summons when it breaks in upon a scene of mirth and gladness. A sense of foreboding or at least of constraint had fallen on the company. The negroes glanced at each other with fearsome eyes and fell back, whispering, to the doorway. Henry, with obvious concern on his earnest face, had started as though to follow and support his father. It was Norman who arose to the occasion and who bade black Pomp to strike up at once with his liveliest music. It seemed to recall the many guests to a sense of one's duty to one's neighbor. Kate Ray was foremost in the effort to banish the sudden gloom, and her cordial, joyous tones gave courage. Mr. Lane, with appreciative eyes, nodded smilingly to Norman, as though to commend his generalship, and raised his glass once more to his lips. Then, glancing toward his wife and daughter, his eyes fell upon Malloy, who, abandoning his station by Daisy's chair, had stepped to the nearest window and, drawing aside the heavy curtain, was striving to peer into the night. His face had gone sud-

denly pale, and the lawyer marked and marveled, Then again came the old butler from the hallway. and in spite of themselves, women and men, too, found it impossible not to look to see whom next he might summon. It was Lane himself, who, setting down the glass, half empty, quietly slipped out into the hallway. It was then that Mr. Malloy was seen to quit the window and, with strange and unaccountable pallor, to edge his way among the groups and couples reforming for the dance, until he reached the main doorway. There he hung, as though listening for tidings from beyond. Kate Ray, whose bright eyes were active as her blithe tongue, noted it all, even as she chatted—noted that, as for the third time Harkless noiselessly entered, the stranger placed a detaining hand upon the negro's arm and whispered a question; heard old Harkless gravely answer, "I do not know, suh," and with an apologetic bow to his master's guest, saw him pass on, and, meeting the eyes of young Marse Henry, bow again. It meant that the elder son was wanted, and now,. as though drawn by some dread or power he could not resist, Malloy followed.

In three minutes Henry was back. The situation was becoming strained, and he felt it. The guests could not, should not, longer be kept in ignorance of the cause of the midnight summons. In quiet tones he announced to the nearest group that a dispatch had come from Cincinnati. Judge McIntyre was quite ill, and business demanded that Mr. Lane should hasten home at once. Mrs. Lane,

bidding Daisy remain, left the room and joined her husband. "Pray go on with the dance," said Henry, though his face, too, had taken on a shade of gray, and obediently Pomp and his satellites fiddled away, and loyally did they strive, men and women both, not to show that they had lost all heart for merriment.

Strive as they might, there were men in that room who felt well assured that all had not been told, and that matters of grave import would yet be announced. The doctor himself came in for a moment, as though he felt it due his friends to maintain a semblance of hopefulness and of the old hospitality. But the glow, the radiance, had fled from his fine old face. Even in his smile the lips would quiver almost piteously. There was trouble in the kindly eyes. There was grief in the stout old heart. "Some kind of a stroke," was the next rumor that flitted about from lip to lip, and Mr. Lane was making preparations to go at once. "Oh, no! Pray keep up the dance," the doctor pleaded. "Come, another nip of egg-nog with me, Harrod," he hailed a tall, stalwart young Kentuckian, who had slipped out in search of the family carriage, and whose face was three shades grayer as he returned. "Help keep it going, my boy, for God's sake!" muttered the doctor as they touched their glasses after the kind old fashion of the day. "I've got to send Norman with Lane. Help Henry all you can." The younger man nodded, clasped the doctor's hand, and turned quickly toward the guests. "Some kind of stroke," was the whisper, yet the

honored Judge and gentleman was never of apoplectic tendency. He was tall, slender, of nervous, sensitive temperament. What kind of a stroke?

Then young Malloy reappeared. Norman, after a few murmured words from his father, had bent over Daisy's chair. "I am going to drive Mr. Lane to the railway," said he. "A train leaves Bardstown for Louisville at daybreak, so I have got to say good night. I had hoped to ride with you to Christmas service in the morning, but——" he stopped irresolute. Her eyes, that had been uplifted to his face, were glancing beyond. He turned to see, and encountered Malloy's. "I, too, must go," was that gentleman's hurried announcement. "I suppose you will change your dress, Mr. Holt. It's what I have to do, and Mr. Lane says you will pick me up at the inn."

Mr. Lane had said nothing whatever to Norman on the subject. There had been no opportunity. It was a twenty-five mile moonless drive, cross country to Bardstown, over on the other branch of the railway, and the only point from which a train could be counted on before afternoon. Cæsar, the rheumatic old coachman, knew little of the northward roads beyond the Hardin Hills. Norman knew every trail and woodpath for thirty miles around. It was a case, the father confided to his son, almost of life or death. He himself would follow as soon—as soon as he could decently do so. Norman Holt had hoped to say more to Daisy Lane before he started, but no word was possible now with this imperturbable adorer hovering over them. It would be half an hour at

least before the start. He would hurry to his room and change his dress. By that time Malloy would have had to go. He choked a bit in the hurried, conventional good-night, as he bowed over her slender, unresponsive hand; then, without another glance at Malloy, hurried away. In ten minutes he was bounding down the stairs again, and met her, wan and tired-looking, going with her mother to her room. "Daisy was so fond of Judge McIntyre and he of her," was the explanation, "and then—she decidedly overdid it this morning."

In the big dining-room were obvious signs of breaking up, despite the doctor's pleadings. People seemed to feel they ought to go. There were whisperings of two dispatches. One merely said the Judge had been suddenly and seriously prostrated. The other was apparently for the doctor alone, and told of something beyond. The messenger who had ridden out from town was a tall native, a hanger-on about the stables of the inn, a Kentuckian, big of nature and free of speech, and he had not scrupled to say in answer to questions of those who were ministering to his inner man, that the wires had been hot with exciting news from Louisville, mainly from points farther south, where the people were in a ferment over the doings in South Carolina. And though the two messages he bore reached the doctor together, he knew they had come nearly an hour apart. "Some kind of a stroke!" Yes, that was the dispatch that came for the editor of the *Clarion*.

Judge McIntyre had been a frequent visitor in the old days of his beloved sister's life, and all the townsfolk knew him and loved him, and there was genuine sorrow among the revelers sitting up at the inn to welcome Father Christmas at the stroke of twelve. "I heard," said the messenger, "I misremember who it was told it, that the Judge had been failing nigh on to a year, but this thing came so sudden like when nobody expected it." Later advices sent by post the following day were to the effect that Judge McIntyre was alone at the office, and the last man to see him before they picked him up insensible was Senator Malloy, who was very much shocked—who said he had left him at four o'clock, apparently perfectly well. At six the janitor heard a sound as of moaning in the judge's private office, forced the door, and found him lying on the sofa unconscious, with froth on his lips and beard. Dr. Welland, whose rooms were in the same building, was summoned instantly, glanced at the stricken man, and sent the janitor on the run for the family physician, and for other aid. When he returned all save doctors and attendants were excluded from the office. There seemed to be a good deal of moving around, and the janitor said it sounded more like a sparring match than a sick room, but these were particulars only gathered later still.

At least no such particulars were known when at two in the morning the stout, Western-built, double-seated spring wagon drove briskly away from Belleview behind a team of Kentucky road-

sters that were the boast of the blue-grass country—Norman, with a silent "boy," his body servant, on the front seat, Mr. Lane, warmly bundled up, on the rear.

The night was dark and moonless, but crisp and frosty. The stars twinkled in the almost cloudless sky. The doctor had come forth with his guests, whispered a few words in Lane's ear as he shook his hand at parting, then nodded to his son and away went the bays. The inn was still brightly lighted and a number of curious villagers hung about. Mr. Malloy came forth with valise and bag, and, with hardly a spoken word, took his seat beside Mr. Lane, and in three minutes Asholt was left behind. In low tone and at intervals Mr. Malloy sought to engage Lane in conversation, but the replies of that gentleman were brief and uninviting. Evidently the lawyer preferred his own thoughts, especially as Malloy developed a desire to speak of the stricken judge and the possible causes of the sudden seizure. Then Malloy essayed some cheery remarks about the finely matched team, speeding like clock-work along the hard-beaten pike, and their driver bowed his head in silence. Finally as they began the ascent of the Hardin Hills, and were winding slowly up a steep grade, the young man tendered cigars to his companions, which were civilly declined, and, lighting a match on the broad back of the negro in front of him, Mr. Malloy subsided into silence.

The road became steep in places and rough and rocky. Evidently they had quit the pike and

were on some cross-country track. Thick darkness surrounded them on every side, but Norman drove steadily, confidently on. For ten minutes or so the pace was slow, the road tortuous.

"Short cut, Norman?" asked Lane, in low tone.

"Yes," was the answer; "Shelby Gap. Saves six miles at least. The pike goes clear round the east end of the range."

Dimly, under the starlight as they looked about them and pulled the blankets closer as the air grew keener, they could discern the ghostly shapes of little firs and cedars. Sometimes a scrub oak scraped a branch or swished its leaves along the wheels, showing how narrow was the path—a mere cart track through the Gap. There were bends and twists and turns, which they followed at a walk. Thrice on the northward, downward slope they splashed through some swift-running brook, and, at last, turning into a broader lane among black shapes of barns and corncribs, Norman touched up his team and again they bowled swiftly on.

"Shelby Gap, you call that, Norman?" questioned Lane. "That's a trick worth knowing when a man's in a hurry and needs the shortest road. What I marvel at is how you can follow it in such pitchy darkness."

"Well, most of my life has been spent, so far, riding through these hills and dales," was the quiet answer. "I think I know every path that leads to Asholt or home, and I love every rod of them. It's all plain sailing now from here to Bardstown, but I believe there are very few men

this side of the hills who could guide you through them to our side, a night as dark as this. You see, they have little occasion to come our way. They have their own railway into the Junction and a good broad pike east to Harrodsburg and Lexington. We are round on the other spur of the road with the hills between us. There's as little going to and fro across that range behind us as there is over in Cumberlands."

"You know your state better than most men know their home city," said Lane. "May the Lord keep Kentucky from the blunders they're making farther south!"

"Amen!" said Norman, gravely. "With all his wrath over the result of the election, father says Kentucky will never secede."

There was a moment's silence. Malloy, listening to their driver's words, interested in spite of himself in what this new and unlooked-for possibility among his rivals might have to say, was yet thinking how unerringly they had been borne through that tortuous gap to the open skies and beaten roads of the northern side. Now, at the mention of secession and what might be the result, he waited, expectant. There was something he much wished to know, but silence again fell upon the party. Malloy then bent forward and broke it with a significant query.

"And if Kentucky should secede, I suppose every good Kentuckian would go with her?"

There was something perilously like a faint sneer in the tone—something, at all events, that Lane himself noted with repugnance, and that

stirred Norman Holt almost as did the words of the cadet lieutenant he had challenged and fought not three months agone—something almost like a "dare," that in boyhood days every lad of spirit so surely resented. Moreover, to the sensitive borderer, Southern in temperament, sympathies, and mode of life, yet devoted to the Union of states and loyal to the flag, the question meant far more. It involved infinitely graver sacrifices, whichever way the decision went, than was the case with those whose homes were farther north or south—whose associations, therefore, were either one thing or the other, who could be in act and word either all Northern or all Southern without the loss of a single friend or dollar. It seemed to him, and it seemed to Lane that, in the momentous nature of the question at issue and the solemnity of the situation, only in awe and among intimates should it be discussed. Well and long as Lane had known Dr. Holt, not once during the visit had he permitted himself to hint at the topic that he could not but see was giving his host the keenest, most painful anxiety. Yet here was a young alien,—so to speak, a stranger to the soil, and, up to within forty-eight hours, to both father and son,—who did not hesitate, as he flicked the ashes of his cigar, to call upon the Kentuckian for an avowal of his intentions. Time had been in the recent past when Lane, journeying in the South, found himself "getting hot under the collar" when some total stranger on steamboat, train, or hotel veranda, would range alongside and, occasionally with

menace in look or tone, demand, "What are your politics?" But this came never from men of education or social standing in the South. Now, a man who mingled, however undeserving, with the best in Ohio society sought to probe the politics of one whose name and lineage were of the best in Kentucky. Lane and Holt senior were men who held a man's politics to be as sacred as his religion, so grave, so solemn were the issues of the day. Lane would have checked the questioner could he have foreseen the question, for in no man's eyes was Malloy so eager to appear unimpeachable. But here was opportunity to embarrass, annoy, perhaps damage a rival in the estimate of the father of the girl whose favor he would win, and the eager boxer forgot his guard in the greed to strike a blow.

For an instant there was no answer. The words that would have sprung to Norman's lips—a rebuke to the impertinence of the stranger—were stifled by the instant awakening of the thought that this was still Belleview's guest. The laws of Kentucky hospitality forbade resentment of an act or word of him who came accredited to a Kentucky fireside. The silence was so marked, so long, that in a sense of eager triumph Malloy was on the point of persisting in his question when Norman spoke:—

"It will be time enough for us to say—when Kentucky has decided. Mr. Lane, can you see the time by your watch?"

"At all events," persisted Malloy, chafing under the implied rebuke, "your state's decision involves

yours. That you probably admit," and he turned significantly to the lawyer as though demanding that he note the point. It surprised him to see that Lane busied himself almost ostentatiously with the watch, as though he would not listen.

"Can you strike a match, Mr. Malloy?" asked the lawyer, adding instantly, "How far from Bardstown now, Norman?" and Malloy was again rebuffed. He found and struck a match.

"Almost five," continued Lane. "We'll make it easily, won't we?"

"By over an hour. There'll be abundant time for breakfast," answered Norman. Then, before Malloy could again return to the attack, Holt half turned, looking over his left shoulder, and deliberately said: "Kentucky's decision involves rather more than you imagine, Mr. Malloy, so say our elders and advisers, and they also counsel—silence."

There was no handshake between the younger men at the railway station that frosty morning. Lane noted that Norman purposely avoided Malloy, who, for his part, was pondering over the words and treasuring them and the events of that night ride for future use against his adversary, even though little dreaming what opportunity that future might speedily bring forth.

CHAPTER IV

FLAG OR FAMILY

April had come, soft and balmy, over the Kentucky shores. Birds and buds and even blossoms were everywhere along the lower Ohio, sweeping, bankful, to its confluence with the Mississippi. Nature spoke in the carol of song birds of joy, peace and plenty, yet there came dread and omen in every day's dispatches from the capital. There were days when no dispatches came from the massive fortress in Charleston harbor, where the flag still floated though menaced by scores of hostile guns. All over the South the war spirit was rampant. The seceding states had chosen a president and congress of their own, and designated Montgomery as their capital. Tennessee and Kentucky were torn with conflicting loves and duties. Brother was divided against brother. Wise men prayed and women wept in fear of the coming storm. It was the matter of but a moment to decide which side to take, save in these fair lands along the dividing line. There were men by hundreds even north of the Ohio, yet close to the Kentucky shore, who could not hide their sympathy for the South, so long had Southern views and leaders dominated the great political party that, almost universal now throughout "the

states in rebellion," was omnipotent in the great cities of the North, where were herded the mass of foreign-born voters, untaught, unthinking. It was in the farm, the village, the workshop, the factory, one read devotion as undivided to the cause of union and universal liberty as was the sentiment throughout the South in favor of slavery. No need to go into details! In every town and village throughout the Southern states men were mustering for military duty. In just a few of the larger cities of the North there was renewed activity among the uniformed and organized militia. New companies met with discouragement, however, at the start. "No arms are to be had from the general government," was the reply from each state capital. It transpired that for long months previous an astute War Secretary, the Virginia Democrat our peppery Kentucky ex-Whig so longed to perforate, had been shipping southward cannon, small arms, and cartridges by the carload, until Northern arsenals were stripped.

It was in the cities close to Mason and Dixon's line and north of the border that, emulating the activity shown in the Southern states, the young men organized for drill, and as early as February there had been formed in Cincinnati a company of youths not yet twenty-one, who called themselves the Anderson Cadets, and at one of their February meetings there had been inscribed on their rolls the name of Norman M. Holt. All they knew of him at first was that he was younger brother of Henry C. Holt, recently admitted to partner-

ship with Mr. Lane, in the old-established firm of McIntyre & Lane. Judge McIntyre, long an honor to the bench, would never sit in judgment on another case. With affairs strangely, some said hopelessly, entangled, and after a sudden and serious illness that left him prostrate for nearly a month, the Judge had retired from duty and from all active participation in the affairs of the firm. It was understood that under the care and guidance of his brother-in-law, Dr. Holt, of Belleview, he had been taken to New Orleans and thence to Havana, in the hope that rest and change would at least partially restore him.

It was rumored that the master of Belleview had been compelled to make not a few sacrifices to meet the demands that came suddenly upon him, and that McIntyre had managed the affairs of his brother-in-law as badly as he had bungled his own, but, as no word of complaint was ever heard, few men cared to question. Certain fine hunters and road animals had been sold from the Belleview stables. Certain offers had been made for certain of the doctor's "niggers," as the chattels were orally referred to. But Holt had never yet bought or sold human flesh. The law made the negroes of Belleview his property, and thus far it had been lucky for them. It cost him more to feed, clothe, and care for them than as servants or helpers they were worth.

There were dozens more than he could ever have used. Neighbors said they were eating the doctor out of house and home and stealing him poor. But they did not say so to him. Life at Belleview

had been something almost patriarchal, but Belleview, all but the kitchens and quarters and a portion of the kennel and stables, was now closed to the world. The master had gone with the stricken brother of the woman he had so devotedly, passionately loved. Henry, his first born, was practicing as a junior partner in the old firm, and Norman, glad to be in Cincinnati on any plea, had begun the study of law under Lane's own guidance, with Lane's own son for chum and companion. Belleview had been left to the care of the overseer and his family, to Harkless and a host of triflers.

With graver face, yet with hopeful spirit, Norman Holt had begun his work. The dreams of squiredom and luxurious ease in which the fond old father had indulged were all dispelled. In sad confidence he had confessed to his sons that more than half his means had been swept away, and that their allowance would be stinted. Henry was for turning over all to Norman. Even his small interest in the business would be enough for him, but Norman would not listen. They took rooms and board together in a quiet section of the city, and, keeping their own counsel as to the estate, went sturdily to work.

But with his twenty-first birthday close at hand, Norman Holt was facing more than one most serious problem. When first he looked into the face of Daisy Lane he had every reason to believe that from his mother's fortune alone there would come to him enough to make him independent. His father had so assured him when he insisted

upon his withdrawal from West Point. It had been assiduously watched and cared for many a long year by Judge McIntyre. Now as the winter began to wane Norman realized that the fortune was gone and that his father's wealth was mainly in negroes, horses, dogs and Belleview,—property that consumed far more than it produced. It fell upon him with almost brutal force that, besides an honored name, he would have next to nothing to offer the girl he loved, and love Daisy Lane he knew he did with all the strength of his heart, now torn with jealous dread and sore dismay. Lane, too, had suffered through his partner's ill-starred ventures, and it had made him silent, reserved, even at times morose.

There was something more than mere mismanagement behind it all, was Henry's reluctant admission. McIntyre, in the height of fame and fortune, had taken Lane by the hand, lifted him from the bottom rung of the ladder well up toward the top, and though the later fall had only been a few feet, it counted more with Lane against his broken benefactor than the contemplation of the benefits he had received at his hands. Indeed, if Lane had not long begun to think that it was his own brains and energy that made the reputation of the firm, he was a rank exception to the rule. He loved money. He had known what it was to be poor and struggling. He liked the doctor's lads and liked them well, but that was before it dawned upon him that the firm must open its doors to both, and not as clients

or contributors. He was a good husband, a fond father, a "square" man and citizen, a genial friend and companion, too, when there was no especial tax on that friendship. But Lane was one of the last men in his line of business whom those keen students of human nature, the would-be borrowers, would think to ask for aid.

He had watched with jealous dread the growing ascendency over his senior of that upstart Malloy. He only vaguely dreamed how deeply McIntyre was enmeshed. He never dreamed at all that Holt's fortune could be involved, and, disliking young Malloy, even while impressed and influenced by his father's wealth, he had seen with secret approval the dawn of Norman Holt's regard for his precious child, had shown him especial confidence and cordiality during the few brief days at Belleview, and now felt it necessary to be correspondingly distant, if not, indeed, cold and at times even repellent. This was the more difficult, because Theodore, his first born, had become frankly enthusiastic about Norman, and was forever talking of him at table, and would have had him perpetually in the house, where indeed Norman's inclination would perpetually have led him; but unerringly the latter noted the father's change of manner, and, although hurt and almost indignant, he was an introspective, sensitive fellow for his years, given to self-examination and to studying both sides of a question. He knew that, having as yet offered nothing and having now nothing to offer, he should not stand between her and those who might come laden with love and

gifts. Moreover, it was next to impossible to go there in the evening and not find Malloy—Malloy, whose manner conveyed too much of self-congratulation and obtrusive triumph not to be hateful in a rival's sight. And then, again, Henry had spoken. He, too, had disliked Malloy. He had heard Kate Ray and her mother refer to him in terms so guarded that he felt there was something much amiss, and Kate Ray was a girl to win whose good opinion the elder brother would have walked to Lexington often as he longed to ride thither, which was every day of the week. Never doubt she knew it—had seen it for a year or more, but she had known him from her earliest childhood, and girls seldom fall in love with men they know so well. She used to visit Cincinnati for a few weeks every winter, and now found reason to decline. She had striven to make him understand, but he would not be daunted. She was angry when he stole that kiss, yet it was anger at herself only. She wished him to know he should not have sought it. She had thought twice, thrice of telling her mother she ought not to go to Belleview, even to welcome Norman, but the mother had set her heart upon it. She had heard of young Malloy, while in Cincinnati, and heard of associations that made her marvel he could set foot within the doors of Belleview, but here again was the Kentucky code. Malloy was there and well accredited. He was the doctor's guest, and, even to Henry, who appealed to her, she shut her lips as to anything she knew against him. From her and from others

whom he knew in Cincinnati, Henry could learn nothing to Malloy's disadvantage, save that he was his father's son, and had some time since been somewhat wild. Now, with abundant means he was welcomed in many houses. He would have a luxurious home. He was an undoubted "catch" for whom many mammas were angling. Why shouldn't Lane listen to him as a suitor for his daughter's hand? Henry did not tell Norman he himself was "lasslorn," but he gravely bade him look the situation in the face and ask himself if it were not wise to avoid the flame. He was surprised when Norman, though with averted eyes, simply replied, "I have."

"I was afraid Theodore might tempt you there oftener than was wise," said Henry kindly. He knew the lads were much together. What he did not know was that, had Theodore his way, there were places far apart from home whither he would for a time at least have tempted his new friend, whither before very long he wished he had not done so: It was only teaching Norman the path to find him and to bear him away from scenes of sin that would have turned his mother white with dread did she but dream of them.

It was to wean him from this craze as much as anything that Norman welcomed the new distraction, the Anderson Cadets. Theo had been urged to join. "I'll do it if you will," he finally said, and then within a week the company discovered that there was a quiet young fellow, a soldier in every step and attitude, who knew more

about drills, tactics, and the like than "Cap" could ever hope to. They made the tall Kentuckian first sergeant at the end of the fortnight, and captain the end of the month, for the original organizer resigned in a huff. The fame of the boy officer's skill and ability went abroad among the local militia, and the drill room of the cadets became the rendezvous for enthusiasts of other and older commands, notably the Guthrie Grays. The boys were drilling with an old weapon known at the time as the musquetoon, a short-barrelled, smooth-bored cross between a blunderbuss and a gas pipe, that fired a bullet as big as an egg, but could never vouch for its billet. It was fitted with a bayonet nearly double the usual length, and unfitted for service of any kind other than learning the "manual." Theo declared at home that in less than three months Norman would make that company the best drilled in the world, and urged the elders and Daisy to come and see the flag presentation that was to occur the first week in April, when the cadets were to appear for the first time in their full-dress uniform, and Norman was to make the speech of acceptance.

State Senator Malloy had been one of the heaviest subscribers to the uniform fund and for the beautiful flag, heavily embroidered with gold and silk, already on exhibition in the show window of a famous shop on Fourth street. Young Malloy, older by four years than twenty-one, had been one of the original members, and a sergeant at the time Holt and Lane were elected. It had

occurred to him that it might not be a bad thing to have Norman Holt in the ranks, where he could order him about, or Theodore, where he could show favor. It had not occurred to him that the company would speedily place Holt at the head of the list of sergeants and give him that conspicuous position universally referred to in those days outside of the regular service as "orderly," which meant a very different thing.

He was prompt to act, however, and without loss of prestige. The "Emmet Guards," attached as Company "C" to a Cincinnati regiment, were divided among themselves, as are apt to be the Green Islanders with no common foe in sight, and the question at issue was the choice of a first lieutenant. Father and son held a brief conference, and the former opened his views—and pocket-book—to the leaders of both sides in the Emmets, with the result that the *Enquirer* announced one morning in March that "the breach between the opposing factions in the Emmet Guards has been most happily healed by the withdrawal of both candidates in favor of Mr. J. Burnett Malloy, only son of the distinguished citizen and Senator, the Hon. T. Martin Malloy, who was almost unanimously elected first lieutenant at last night's meeting. Mr. Malloy has been conspicuous in the organization and instruction of the Anderson Cadets, in which somewhat exclusive corps he holds the rank of sergeant, and is looked upon as one of the most brilliant and capable officers on their rolls. So much so, indeed, that much surprise, not to say unfavorable comment, has been

excited by the recent action of the cadets in selecting a stranger to the community for the most responsible office and setting him over the head of so capital a soldier as Mr. Malloy. The Emmets seem to be made of 'sterner stuff,' and their prompt tender of honorable promotion to the stone the builder rejected carries with it something of merited rebuke to the fledgling command of society pets."

Of course, Mr. Malloy assured his comrades of the cadets that the honor was as unsought as the newspaper fling was uninspired by anything he had said or thought. He gave a supper to certain of his clique in the boy company and "set up" the cigars and other accompaniments for the Emmets, and was present, in a very becoming and stunning new uniform and sword (the latter hooked up wrong side before), the night of the flag presentation to the cadets. Remarkably neat, trim, and natty looked these young gentlemen in their new gray "regimentals," and very soldierly was their tall young captain. But when the crowd began to gather and it devolved on him to aid in seating the many women who came smiling to do honor to the occasion, he became palpably nervous. Lieutenant Malloy, as was to be expected, flashed hither and yon very much at home, and when the floor was cleared, and the company formed, and a venerable citizen and jurist appeared in their midst, the beautiful flag in hand, a body of prominent citizens at his back, the lieutenant of the Emmets took post by the side of Miss Lane, whose cheeks were flushing

with excitement and delight (of seeing Theodore in his corporal's chevrons, no doubt). Silence fell on the assembly as the Judge began his ringing address, full of lofty patriotism and concluding with a thrilling peroration in which he dwelt upon the dangers that menaced that very flag, and the beloved land of which it was the symbol, and the heroic veteran whose name they bore now penned in a fortress menaced by rebel guns—finally calling on one and all to declare their undying devotion to the flag and the cause it stood for, and was rewarded by resounding acclamations and tumultuous applause as he placed the sacred emblem in the hands of the blushing captain, who, with his sixty brave lads in gray, had shouted loud the "Aye" that pledged them to its service.

Then, as silence fell upon the assemblage again, Norman, with all the color gone from his face, began almost inaudibly, stammered, then blushed, became utterly confused, and finally fairly broke down in his speech, and with a few incoherencies called forth the colorbearer, gave over the flag to him, and fell back abashed and dismayed.

True, the Andersons cheered and the crowd clapped and hurrahed to assure him of confidence and sympathy. True, in handling the company later in a dashing drill of half an hour, Norman was himself again, and his ringing voice and splendid bearing showed, as many a soldier has showed, that though speechmaking wasn't his forte, he was yet a leader of men. That part of the proceeding was not referred to in the news-

paper account of the affair. A collation was served before the drill, and many people left immediately after that. Daisy and her mother sought to stay, as Theo had urged them, but Mr. Lane had business awaiting him at his library. Mr. Malloy had heard that "the drill was to be abandoned, as the captain seemed to be somewhat overcome—had lost his head in fact, and the boys were already beginning to repent them of their error." Indeed, there were boys who thought that breakdown ignominious. They little knew the emotions warring in the heart of the young soldier, as he strove to speak, with his brother's stern, sad, white face confronting him in the heart of the throng, with Henry's dark eyes fixed almost in menace upon him. More than that, close by Henry's side stood two young men, who, a few months back, were Norman's friends and classmates in the battalion of cadets at the Point—two young men, who, with others from the seceding states, had tossed their warrants to the winds, torn off the uniform of the national academy, and, quitting it forever, were now on their way to unite their fortunes with those of friends and kindred in the South—to join in armed assault upon the very flag Norman this night of nights was swearing to defend "against all enemies or opposers whomsoever."

"Are you conscious what it means, Norman? Do you realize you are pledging your services against your own people, your home, your estate, your fortune?" This was the solemn question Henry put to him as late that night the brothers

walked to their distant lodging after the sad, constrained good-by between him and his former cadet comrades. "Moreover, do you not know that in the event of war between the sections our father will surely take sides with the South?"

"Even if the state refuse to secede, as she has thus far?" queried the younger.

"Even if she refuse," was the firm reply. "Norman, this idea that Kentucky can remain neutral is absurd. Sooner or later we shall be drawn in, and men must decide and determine quickly. I hate to see the Union breaking, but the break has more than begun. It is an accomplished fact. That man at Washington has said one true thing at least: 'This nation cannot live half slave, half free.' Now, the Ohio is the natural dividing line. All our tastes and sympathies are with the united South. Thousands of Northerners are with us too. They are divided against themselves. We shall have a new nation—a new South. I see it coming as sure as the sun, and I shall stand with our father and our friends, Norman, and so will you. No wonder you broke down to-night!"

"Do you mean—you—and father—or Kentucky, for that matter, would fight against that flag?" asked the younger, in amaze.

"God forbid! I'm for setting it up in every state capital throughout the South. It isn't the flag of the North, man! It's as much the South's as theirs. It's the flag of the whole country—the united nation."

"That's just it," was the instant answer, as Norman turned and looked his brother in the face.

"The united nation, but when you pull away from the Union you can't take its flag with you. You can't even scratch out one star. It was the South's as much as the North's until they quit. It is Kentucky's so long as she doesn't quit; and, until she does quit, at least, it's mine, too, and by heaven, I'll stick to it!"

"Then suppose you are ordered to march south and make war on your kindred. Already they are talking at Washington of 'coercing' them in again," said Henry.

"Just as in Alabama and Mississippi they talk of coercing Kentucky out. Which is worse?" was the spirited rejoinder.

They had reached the door of the modest lodging they had taken toward the East End. Late as it was, a light was burning in the hall, and a voice hailed them from over the balusters of the second floor. "There's a telegram just come for Mr. Henry. I put it on the mantel in your room." Then the speaker chastely vanished and the brothers hurried aloft. There was the fateful message, dated New Orleans. "Your uncle worse. Coming home by river. Should reach Belleview via Louisville about 15th. Both meet us."

About the fifteenth, and here it was the sixth! "I can go," said Norman briefly. "I must go," said Henry. "Father evidently needs us. Perhaps he fears the worst. Now, Norman, is—is not this—a favorable opportunity—a good excuse?"

"For what?" was the question as the younger turned sharply on the elder man.

"For your resignation."

"I have resigned once, in six months, at father's demand, and regret it bitterly already. I shall not resign again, Henry, until I have far graver reason."

"Then even before you can see father again you may be ordered—on active duty, Norman."

"And if I am—I'll obey."

One week later the North took fire with the news that South Carolina had opened the ball—Sumter had fallen—the beloved flag was humbled in the dust—the President had called for 75,000 men to defend the capital, and Henry Holt went back to his native state alone.

CHAPTER V

SOLDIER IN SPITE OF ALL.

Away in Western Virginia, with the bold heights of the Alleghanies at their back, a fair, winding river at their feet, a little column of Union troops had halted on their homeward way. The fierce excitement of the first few weeks of the great war had settled down to a tense, silent strain. Bull Run had taught an impatient and importunate public one valuable lesson, and the yell of "On to Richmond!" had given place to "Look out for Washington!" The 75,000 summoned for the defense of the capital were being rapidly replaced by regiments enlisted for "three years or the war." Many of the so-called "three months' men" —militia regiments accepted at the first alarm— were now returning to reorganize for further service, and among them was Ohio's first tender. With the Grays as its nucleus the gallant regiment had been promptly recruited to the maximum and whirled away to the front, had done its full share in the strange, unaccustomed service that befell it, and now, with wiser heads, was beginning to discuss the possibilities of the future. Many changes would be wrought in its personnel. The colonel had got his stars and gone to Washington. The lieutenant colonel was hoping for the eagles

and supreme command. One major and two captains expected, and six at least hoped for, promotion. Others were to drop out. One or two of the officers had been dropped. Others might follow. Those men who were to re-enlist would have a powerful influence in the selection of the company officers, at least, and many a plot had been hatched, many a plan well laid, even before they sighted again and greeted with glad cheers the beautiful Ohio, the Belle Riviere the voyageurs so aptly named. With two officers whose names were daily on the tongue of almost every man in Company "C," ycleped the Emmets when they were at home, our story has much to do. The first in order of rank, their first lieutenant, not being on hand to speak for himself, was not too well spoken of, now that their brief term had expired and they were free to talk at all. A very, very popular officer was Lieutenant Malloy the first fortnight of the war. He Jacked and Billied and joked with the men, stood treat on innumerable occasions, and was cheered and applauded at every turn, much to the detriment of good order and military discipline, wherever he went within the lines.

That was in May. On the other hand, the tall, stern young second lieutenant, the drill-master and tactician of the company, with his somber eyes and sad, hollow-cheeked face, was the reverse of popular. He rarely laughed, he never treated, and he held aloof from even the jolliest men as though he were a superior being. For a time they hated him, called him "interloper," "Shang-

hai," and the like, but that, too, was in May. They had elected him second lieutenant because their own couldn't go, and because everybody said what a fine drill instructor he was. He had made the Anderson Cadets almost perfect, but they were too young to go, said the Governor. To the intense wrath of the boys, they could not get into an accepted regiment. The Emmets were induced by the colonel, the major, their captain, and the adjutant to elect that young Captain Holt their second lieutenant. They did it. They were glad enough to do anything to get away to war. "But, Lord!" said Corporal Connelly, "if we'd known what airs he'd put on we'd never have named him." But, that, too, was in May.

When their General, however, said in June that the Emmets were easily the best-drilled company in the brigade, the boys broke forth in Celtic joy, and went and cheered their drillmaster, leaving "Cap" to thank the General. Then the Emmets turned out the best guard details, had the best-taught sentries, took "orderly" for the commanding officer six times a week, had, too, the neatest tents and company street—all due to that young expert, although "Cap" willingly accepted the credit. The adjutant shortly afterward sprained his wrist, and the colonel detailed Lieutenant Holt to act in his place, and the Emmets went wild again with delight to see how much more style and snap their lieutenant threw into the duties of adjutant in the ceremonies of parade and guard mounting than did the original incumbent, who looked on with clouded eyes and rueful face,

and returned to duty rather earlier than the surgeon wished. Only once were they under fire, and then they made a prodigious smoke and noise, and the commands of most officers were inaudible, even the colonel's, as he rode raging up and down in the rear of his line. But when skirmishers were called for, the "Old Man" designated company "C," and "Cap" sent Mr. Holt in command of the line, Mr. Malloy being somewhat indisposed, and Norman's voice rang over the field clear and confident above the clamor, and the General praised the boy officer, now just twenty-one, and the regiment looked up to and saluted him with a fervor felt for precious few of his seniors. Between the two lieutenants of Company "C" there had been hardly any intercourse. The breach widened day by day, but after this episode Malloy fell really ill—a low fever of some kind, and his father came and took him home two weeks ahead of the regiment, and Norman had command of the Emmets for ten days while "Cap" was away sitting on a court-martial. And all the time he was growing in the respect and esteem of the rank and file of the big regiment, yet, strangely, he seemed to have few friends or associates among his brother officers. He was much by himself, writing long letters, pacing up and down, lost in sad thought, for his face showed it. Letters came for him frequently at the outset, letters from Kentucky that were read with ever-increasing sadness and despond, but even these had ceased.

Even to the colonel, who had seemed to take a great liking to him, Norman could not, or would

not, speak of their contents. The only intimate he had had in Cincinnati was Henry, his brother, now striving to be neutral at home, and glorying in what he considered the spirited refusal of Kentucky's Governor to furnish troops "for the wicked purpose of coercing sister states." Norman had sought and stood by Theodore Lane, as all men will a certain girl's brother. Yet Theodore had never won his confidence. The lad was high-spirited, impulsive. thoughtless, and a few months younger than Norman—just young enough to be unable to enlist without the parental consent, which, being refused, compelled him to stay wrathfully at home while Norman was winning honors, so at least the earlier accounts declared; and Theo, who had been Norman's loudest advocate and ardent admirer, now felt those pangs of envy that, if not crushed out, are apt to sour the milk of human kindness in weak human nature. Do we always rejoice,—all of us, when friends, and neighbors we have fought and played with year after year, become suddenly famous in some other field where our names are unknown? Unable to share the honors of his associates who had gone to the front, was it altogether unnatural that Theo Lane should have wished that there had been no honors to speak of? However, this is a story, not a homily. Theodore Lane was the first to take Malloy by the hand on his return, pale, somewhat thin and very interesting looking to the girls, and Lane was not too sorry to hear from his lips that things were not all straight about Holt. Yes, oh yes, he was a good drillmaster.

He ought to be; he had had exceptional advantages. But the feeling was growing, Malloy spoke of it with deep reluctance, that—that Holt's loyalty was not what it should be.

Officers knew, and men were beginning to know, that Holt had been in correspondence with rampant rebels. Everybody seemed to have heard by this time that Dr. Holt was one of Governor Magoffin's most trusted and truculent advisers,—that while he had opposed secession at first, it was because he believed Southern rights could be obtained and enforced without it. He believed in the heaven-born right of the Southern gentleman to rule the land. It was known that the doctor and Henry Holt had been to Tennessee and even farther South, had had conferences with Albert Sidney Johnston, the fiery Texan who was organizing the Southern forces in the West. It was declared that a commission as surgeon general had been tendered the doctor and a staff position offered to his eldest son. It was fully believed in the regiment, said Malloy, that a captaincy awaited Norman in the Confederate service, and that he would have accepted had his state gone with the rest, as it might go any day. He was an unsafe man to trust with the sword of authority. All this began to be whispered, if not noised abroad, in Cincinnati at the very moment the old regiment was nearing its home station to reorganize. All this was hinted about the homestead of the Lanes, who were loyal to the core, and there had already been a violent rupture between the now senior member and the

hot-headed client at Belleview. Lane, at least, knew well that the father and the elder son were every day turning more and more to the side of open defiance to the general government, and when early in June he had been summoned to Belleview to attend the last solemn rites as they laid to rest the form of his old partner and benefactor, there had been a stormy controversy in which, among other things, Lane was told that Norman Holt would stand exiled and disinherited if he did not quit the service of the "Lincoln government" and return to his home and kindred. No wonder the lonely soldier's face had grown sad and sallow. He had, indeed, been in correspondence with the enemy, who had exhausted every argument, plea, and threat in vain efforts to break his resolve to stand steadfast to the flag.

And that bright August afternoon, as the regiment halted at the river in sight of the rolling hills of their beautiful state, the men of the Emmets had resolved, with but half a dozen exceptions, to re-enlist on reaching home. "Cap" should be re-elected. He was a father to them, an honest old Irish soldier, who didn't know much, but did the best he knew how. And then, with a cheer, they swore their second lieutenant should have a bar upon his shoulder in place of Malloy. That night a telegram reached the State Senator in Cincinnati, which he gravely read, then thrust into his pocket with a laugh. "They can elect whom they d—n please," said he, "but we'll appoint whom we please."

A month later and the old regiment, reorgan-

ized and already in camp, awaited the coming of the Governor's secretary with the commissions of the officers duly elected by the men. Colonel, field, and staff were already commissioned. The United States mustering officer was on the spot and ready. There had been strange and unaccountable delay in sending the prized parchments. The regiment was urgently needed at the front. It was to go within a day of the completion of the muster, and, rumor had it, to go to Kentucky, where the home guards were serving only ten days at a time, and not then unless they felt like it. An advance into Kentucky on part of the Confederates was imminent, and General Anderson, commanding "by request of the Kentucky Legislature" at Louisville, was obviously nervous over the situation. Kentucky had objected to the entrance of Northern troops within her borders so long as the Confederates kept beyond the limits, but there was her own son and statesman, Buckner, commanding a powerful force at Camp Boone, just across the line in Tennessee, and if he were to leap forward to Bowling Green, what then? Whole families said, "Join him!" Whole familes said, "Fight him!" Other families, divided against themselves, espoused eagerly, strenuously, one side or the other. There were no half-hearted men in Kentucky. Henry Holt had ordered a brand new uniform as major of staff in the Confederate service. Norman Holt, with the glistening strap of a first lieutenant on his coat of Union blue, was drilling Company "C" long hours each day when the Governor's secre-

tary arrived at Camp Rosecrans, accompanied by Mr. J. Burnett Malloy, who had failed of re-election, and, thirty-four in number, the officers present assembled to receive their commissions at his hands. Then and not until then was it learned that, in one case only, the Governor, in the exercise of his discretion, had seen fit to disregard the election, and for good and sufficient reasons, as was stated, Mr. J. Burnett Malloy was re-established first lieutenant of Company "C" instead of the almost unanimous choice of the men. The bar so confidently promised Norman Holt at the hands of the state had come indeed—but it was a bar sinister.

"You will see now," Malloy had whispered to Mr. Lane, "how quick that will settle the question and send him South, where he belongs."

But Malloy was wrong. When the regiment was mustered in a few days later, a new name appeared among the many Hibernian patronymics that adorned the roll of the rank and file of Company "C." It was that of Private Norman M. Holt.

CHAPTER VI

"DESDICHADO"

The dream of neutrality was a thing of the past. With the northward dash of the Confederates—Buckner's division on Bowling Green and Elizabethtown, and Zollicoffer's through Cumberland Gap into the heart of the state—Kentucky found herself a veritable battle-ground, and, as though ashamed of their previous inaction, her men flew to arms in earnest. On one side or the other, the most vehement, onward fighters wherever they served, these "sons of the dark and bloody ground"—her soldiers—were promptly arrayed. The die was cast. The South had crossed the Rubicon, and loyal Kentucky felt her dignity assailed, her soil invaded. It turned the scale with many a wavering heart. It transferred into Unionists and Loyalists and stanch upholders of the old flag scores of gallant fellows whose heart-strings up to that time seemed half woven in the fabric of state's rights and Southern supremacy. It cost many a wrench and rupture, but, once the step was taken, no man turned back.

In hundreds of families brother was arrayed against brother, the famous names of the old commonwealth, whose motto had been "United we stand," were now to be found in division,

brigade, and regimental commands fronting each other in the field of arms. It was the policy of the South to tempt the wavering with commissions to high rank. It was the mistake of the North to treat with neglect and disfavor soldiers who hailed from the border states. The man who had attested his loyalty and devotion to the Union, even at the cost of disinheritance and ostracism, should have been above suspicion. There had been a rending apart in the fair old blue grass country, where galloping scouts announced the northward sweep of the Confederate columns. Asholt was wellnigh robbed of its able-bodied men, most of whom had hastened to Buckner at Bowling-Green, and joined his command.

As for Belleview, it was turned over to the care, as has been said, of the overseer and butler. The genial old host of the winter before, with deeper lines about his wistful eyes, with all the buoyant gladness gone, had taken himself to Nashville, and thence to Johnston's camp, too old, he said, to serve as surgeon, but not too old to be adviser and friend. There, too, was Henry, major and aide-de-camp, and both marveled as they read from a Louisville paper the names of the officers of the —th Ohio, hastened forward to re-enforce Rousseau, for there was no Norman Holt among them. They found instead the name of J. Burnett Malloy. Those were days in which papers and people, too, went to and fro between the lines with little let or hindrance, and there came to Johnston's headquarters, eager to tender his sword to the South,

a youth well known to the Holts and to society in Louisville and Cincinnati, and through him for the first time the amazed father heard the particulars as given out by the regiment on its way through Louisville to the front, to wit: that, although elected first lieutenant by his men, Norman Holt was believed by the state authorities to be in sympathy with the South and in correspondence with Southerners in active rebellion; that he was considered too "shaky" in his loyalty to be intrusted with a commission; that, deprived of it, he had confounded his detractors, whoever they were, by enlisting forthwith in the ranks of the company of which he was the choice for second in command.

And hearing this, the doctor's rage burst all bounds. He had stormed at his son for siding against the South. He disowned him, he said. and declared he would never again receive him, But when told that his boy, his flesh and blood, had been repudiated by the state with whose foremost regiment and with whose colors he had cast his lot, words utterly failed him. He was for rushing back to the Ohio, speeding to Columbus, bearding the Governor in his capitol, and fighting him on the spot for his insult to the name and fame of Holt. The boy might be wrong-headed, ungrateful, misled, "all because of his love for a Northern girl," the doctor had it. (How many a Northern-born soldier went amiss because of his love for a lass in the sunny South!) Yes, Norman might be "a rank traitor, suh, to the South, suh, but he was incapable of double

dealing, suh. He could no more lie than I could fly, suh."

They had no easy time holding the irate old gentleman on their side of the Cumberland, so bent was he on resenting the affront to the name. He stared incredulously when they told him he would be arrested and probably sent to a Northern prison, perhaps tried as a spy, if caught within the Northern lines. Mad with eagerness for the South to assert herself, for the war to begin in good earnest, and to redeem Kentucky, as he expressed it, he could hardly realize that the war was actually on and raging all about him. The idea of accusing a Holt of Kentucky of double dealing! Let him catch that buckeye Governor but once and he'd horsewhip him, suh, cowhide him, suh, and those who knew the doctor knew that, at least, was no idle threat.

Henry himself caught some of the father's fury. He, too, was indignant at the injustice done his brother. He knew even before the significant breakdown the night of the flag presentation how sorely Norman was tried. He knew how the lad grieved over Lane's altered manner and the almost frigid greeting accorded him when he called at the house. He knew that the boy's brave heart was fairly surrendered to that lovely face and winsome smile, but the face had been clouded, the smile timorous and fitful for days before the fatal shot that divided North from South and set brother against brother. Lane would live up scrupulously to the business obligation which made Henry a junior partner, and

Norman a reader in his office, but beyond that Henry Holt saw plainly the pragmatical lawyer would not go. He saw, moreover, that Lane, who had so deprecated Senator Malloy's influence over McIntyre, and who had been so averse to the younger Malloy's advances, was by April almost as frequently in conference with the Senator as ever McIntyre had been, while Malloy, Jr., almost haunted the old house on Fourth street, toward which Norman so often walked at evening and to which his visits became perforce less and less frequent. What Henry did not know was that Daisy Lane, at least, held out against the assiduous devotions of Malloy, and despite all the whisperings she heard by day or night to the detriment of Norman Holt, warmed to him in her innermost heart, even though forbidden to encourage him in the least. "Theodore thinks the world of him," she said, with flaming cheeks, the evening following the presentation.

She had actually let Norman see a little of the compassion and tenderness of her heart, and thereby made him almost forget the humiliation of his failure as a speechmaker. But the mother had swooped upon them and roundly rated Daisy as soon as Norman could with decency be made to take his leave. "Theodore thinks the world of him, and so did you, mamma, until after he came here from Belleview! Now you snub him, and you—you welcome Mr. Malloy. It was just the other way three months ago," wherein the young lady spake only truth, but to no purpose. "Times are changed," said Mrs. Lane, "and what

might have been suitable last winter is now out of the question. Besides, your father finds he misjudged Senator Malloy. He is a man *much* misunderstood," and when Mrs. Lane spoke thus loftily, the daughter knew that argument was useless.

Yet her heart was wrung, and her tears fell thick and fast when the regiment hurried away at the call of danger. There had been a look in Norman's face, a clasp from his trembling hand she could not misinterpret, and her humid eyes had spoken answering volumes into his, but to what purpose? Not once had there passed a line between them during the three months he was away. He had written regularly, in fact, incessantly, to Theo at first, and had sent many messages. It was, "Tell Miss Daisy this and tell Miss Daisy that," and these, at first, the boy delivered. But Lane, senior, took the boy to task. With no Norman to watch over his waywardness, the lad had speedily fallen into evil courses again. There had been nights away from home and days in bar and billiard rooms, and demands from creditors, and Lane got wind of much of it, paid the pressing debts, but put a ban on future indiscretions. "What's more, I want this—this nonsense between your sister and—young Holt summarily stopped. No more messages, understand me, either way. You needn't say anything of this to him, of course, but you must suppress everything coming from him for her."

Then Malloy came home, and, not so much by what he said as by what he intimated, told tales

of Norman Holt that undermined Theodore's feeble, superficial faith, and made that weak vessel only moderately glad to see Norman again. There was no ring to the voice, no vim to the hand-clasp, no soul in the welcome, and Norman, sad and changed, and five years matured, with all his home trouble, knew well what influences must have been at work, and realized, as many another fellow had done, that the devoted friendship lavished on an idol's brother, was devotion thrown away.

He saw with sorrow Theodore's changed manner and ill-appearance. He saw with something like dismay that the lad was drinking to excess and frequenting the old resorts. In a burst of confidence, late in June, Theodore had written the details of his father's discovery and the payment of his harassing debts (which did not include, however, the $100 he owed the lieutenant), and the total stoppage of his allowance. Yet here he was again "treating" lavishly as was his wont, punting at pool and billiards, and losing himself at night in a faro bank much affected by young men about town. Whence came the means? Norman saw with bitter and jealous pain that the young fellow was now quite frequently with Malloy. Coming up from camp with a patrol after absentees, he was surprised to find Theodore at six one summer morning, looking vastly as though he had been up all night, slinking and skulking at the vestibule of the Malloy homestead. What sought he there, and at that hour? Then stories of the lad's lapse into worse dissipation than

before came to Norman's unwilling ears, and when he would have sought and pleaded with him Theodore was not to be found.

A fortnight was spent in the reorganization, and "Cap" would have been utterly at a loss without Holt, his right-hand man. "Cap" well knew the lad's value and ability, as did the "Old Man," now gone to Washington as a General; but "Cap" found the new regimental commander oddly unresponsive when he bragged of his subaltern. "Cap" took things easy, and not a few noggins of poteen in his daily rounds, and loaded all the work upon Norman's shoulders, so that only rarely could the junior get to town. When he did, and asked for Theodore, he heard strange and uncanny tales about his doings. The boy was in a bad way. Mr. Lane had gone to Washington on business; some said he had got the war fever, and was seeking a commission as major and judge advocate, and the mother and Daisy seemed to have no control over the youngster. Malloy was befriending him; had occasionally looked him up and taken him to his own house to "straighten out." But his sprees seemed endless. Norman, with throbbing heart, had called on the Lanes twice. Once, with her mother, he had seen the girl he loved. Once the ladies begged to be excused, yet as he looked ruefully back from the street below, surely he could not be mistaken, it was Daisy who appeared an instant at an open window and gazed at him and put her finger to her lips. But she was gone as quickly—gone all of a sudden, as though she

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dreaded being found there. What spell was over the child?

Then he had striven to communicate with his father, and the letters were returned, unopened. The old man's wrath was unappeased. Then he had written to Henry. He longed to see the old home again. Kentucky was still "neutral." People still went to and fro, no matter whether they were Southern or Union in sympathies. He might be able, he wrote, to get away for two days—run down by night boat to Louisville and out to Belleview by morning train. Would not Henry urge the father to reconsider and to grant his boy one meeting, one conference? This time came a line in the old doctor's trembling hand.

"Unless you would add to the wrong you have done your name, never dare set foot at Belleview so long as you wear that uniform."

And then, to add the last pound to his load of trouble, he stood disowned by the authorities of the government he so loyally had served at the cost of almost everything he held dear, was refused his commission on the eve of the regiment's departure, and now, homeless, fatherless, friendless save among the rough fellows who had given him the wealth of their soldier hearts, what was there left him to do but enlist as one of them and with them fight his way to honor and to recognition—or fall like a soldier in the attempt?

Away to the front they had gone, "Cap" kind and sympathetic as could be, the men crowding about him with uncouth words of cheer. The first lieutenant had been held back to come on

later with certain recruits and men who had been gathered in by the provost guard. Stirring events were imminent. Louisville was in a state of alarm and excitement as they marched through, and two days later they were being trundled out southward over the old, familiar railway. Buckner, whose advance had pounced on Elizabethtown, had drawn in his claws before Rousseau's threatening brigade in the rocky, tunnel-pierced heights beyond Salt River. The rapidly arriving regiments from across the Ohio, untaught and undisciplined as yet, were being herded into camps well out in front of the metropolis, while the daring invaders from the South hung on and fortified at Bowling Green. There followed two months of incessant drill and preparation, of occasional alarm, and then there came a day when a great surprise awaited the sad, silent Kentuckian in the humble private's dress. He was drilling a squad of raw men in the manual of arms when the first sergeant came forward with some new arrivals. "Take these young fellers, too, corporal," said he, for already "Cap" had found means to "lance" his favorite to that grade, pending the coming of a vacancy, and turning quickly, Norman's astonished eyes fell upon the foremost of the squad in cheap, ill-fitting blue. It was Theodore Lane.

Three days later, just before the blessed Christmastide was ushered in, there came a sensation beside which this was forgotten. Late in the afternoon six companies of the regiment, "C" among them, had been loaded on flat cars and sent

jolting slowly away southward. Cavalry—some of Johnston's regiment—had been scouting about Bardstown for a week, and the air was full of rumor and whisperings. With aching eyes and compressed lips, Norman Holt stood clinging to a stanchion and gazing out over the well-remembered landscape. He had been praying for opportunity to confound his accusers and command their respect. He had been longing for active duty, but never had it seemed to occur to him that the first service demanded should be here in his own native state, almost in his native county. With strange excitement, with something like dread forboding as the long train puffed on into the gathering twilight and the stars came peeping out in the eastward skies, he stood there silent, somber, wondering, and filled with vague, tremulous uneasiness. At last there was a stop and orders were given to scramble out, and in the dim light the companies re-formed and the captains rectified the alignment on the center.

A troop of cavalry, dismounted, stood or sprawled across the open space a few rods away. Dim lights were gleaming here and there in the cluster of dark houses to the left. The train backed away. "Going for the rest of the regiment" was the explanation, and the order was passed to the men to stack arms, build their little fires, spread their blankets, and get such sleep as they might. They would be aroused before dawn and camp would not be pitched before another day. Norman had only just unslung knapsack when a sergeant came from the right of the line.

AT SIGHT OF THE LATTER, NORMAN HOLT'S HEART GAVE A SUDDEN THROB OF WARNING.

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"Cap wants you," was his amateur method of conveying the message, and "Cap" said the colonel wished to see Corporal Holt at once. Norman's face was very pale as he stepped within a dimly lighted office at the railway station. A dozen horses, held by orderlies, were clustered about the little building. Three or four cavalry officers were chatting in low tone on the platform. The colonel, his forage-cap pulled down over his eyes, was leaning back in an arm-chair and slashing at his knee with the tassel of his crimson sash. The adjutant was scribbling at some papers at the bare, wooden table. The young major was seated at his desk. He had been reading aloud from a letter, but stopped short as Norman halted at the door and tapped before coming in. Two other officers stood, in low-toned chat, behind the colonel, one a captain of cavalry, the other—Lieutenant Malloy, and at sight of the latter, Norman Holt's heart gave a sudden throb of warning.

"Come in," said the colonel, and without another word sat studying the pale features of the young soldier who entered, saluted, and stood attention before him.

"Corporal Holt, I understand you know every path and by-road beyond the Hardin Hills and can easily lead through Shelby Gap, even of a dark night. That is so, is it not?"

For a moment the silence was painful. The young soldier's lips moved. He seemed striving to swallow something before he could speak. His voice choked as at last he answered:

"Yes, sir."

"Then report to Captain Wing for duty at once. He will furnish you with a horse. You will see to it that the squadron is guided to reach the point he mentions before daybreak. And now, not a word of it to anybody!"

CHAPTER VII

THE NIGHT RIDE

It was midnight as the little column toiled up the winding trail that led to the gap. The waning moon had climbed half-way toward the zenith and was looking down with much more than half-shut eyes upon the dim upheaval of the Hardin range and the bosky undulations to the south.

Away in the northward valley, here and there at distant posts and points along the crude, cross-country railway, glow-worm lights that told of little watch-fires could be traced at regular intervals, but on the southward slope and far over toward the long, curving spur of hills that swept southeastward from the rocky range to the west, all was unbroken gloom. The stars twinkled faintly in the southern sky. The bay of watch-dogs in the farm country to the north had ceased as the column entered the winding trail to the gap. The gay laugh and jest with which the troopers rode away from the main body at the railway had long since been hushed. Men spoke only at rare intervals, and in low and muttered tone when they spoke at all, for little by little it had dawned upon the squadron that this was no mere holiday ride through the friendly farm lands

of the Middle Fork, no Christmas call from camp to camp.

They were striking through what had been for weeks past a barrier to a new, uncertain, unknown, inhospitable region, where Union sentiment had been strangled in many a little town and hamlet, where armed rebellion rode at will, influenced by powerful citizens like the Holts and Homans. Foraging and scouting parties were frequent from the divisions of Buckner and Zollicoffer, the one intrenched at Bowling Green at the southwest, but covering the fords and bridges of the Green River, the other encamped near Mill Spring on the Cumberland, southeastward, both stirring up the country for miles. Union camps lay east of Belleview, anywhere from thirty to forty miles distant, but, thanks to the curtaining range of the Hardins, all main traveled roads, save the far-sweeping pike, left Belleview to the south, independent in having its own spur to the Nashville railway.

Into that almost secluded region, therefore, the Union cavalry had only once penetrated when scouting southwest from Harrodsburg, and on that occasion it suddenly encountered a superior force of gray-jacketed lads from below the Cumberland, who came within an ace of capturing the whole party, and who drove them, yelling at their heels, half-way back to the Kentucky. There were men riding in Wing's squadron this very night who knew all about that raid, had had full particulars from their comrades of the home guards, and looked back in vain effort to see how many

men were with them to-night. It couldn't be a big command, said one, since Captain Wing was leader. Still, as was pointed out, this might only be the advance guard, or a side scout or something of that kind. A big force was probably moving in support. All the same, there were not a few who wished that somebody else had the bliss of being foremost in this stealthy night raid through the forbidding range; and when the signal was given to halt and dismount as the head of column reached the summit of the pass, and Wing, with his first lieutenant and the tall, smooth-faced young fellow who rode as guide, climbed the hillside to the east, the troopers huddled in little knots and talked it over in muffled tones. The war was a new thing. They had sworn to obey the officers appointed over them, but they thought the officers, being Americans like themselves, should take "the boys" into their confidence, as it were, tell them what was up, where they were going, and what for. In fact, if it was any such damfool exhibition as that which had resulted so disastrously to those fellows from Camp Dick Robinson, why—they didn't want to be in it. There was an underlying sentiment that no hazardous move should be made without first putting it to vote, but this, be it remembered, was when the sovereign citizen had but recently quit the shop, the mill, or the schoolhouse for a place in the ranks. Napoleon has said all men are cowards in the dark, and among these untried lads, who were so soon to develop qualities of such superb mettle and endurance, there were some

who saw giants in every stunted tree, stealthy signals in peeping stars, and heard the voice of ambuscading hundreds in the hoot of harmless owls. And in one of these low muttering groups the question was asked, "Who is the fellow riding with 'Cap' to-night?" The average American hates to say captain. It sounds too civil—too subservient.

He himself hardly knew. Like one in some weird, almost terrible dream, the young Kentuckian sat in saddle on the captain's left, and, indicating the road by a mere turn of the head or a brief word, gave himself up to painful thought. With all his sad experiences, with all his grief at the loss of his father's love and trust, the loss of home and friends and station, never until this night had Norman Holt begun to realize what it meant to take sides against his own kith and kin. Never had it dawned upon him as a possibility that he might be called upon to use his knowledge of his native state and county in guiding to the hearthstones of his life-long friends and neighbors a column that could come only with hostile intent. What did it mean? What did it mean? They must reach Belleview before the dawn. He had only four hours yet in which to make it. His anxiety was not on that score, but —what sought the column there? Only the servants were at home, as he believed. The darkies, of course, still hung about the quarters, and were with difficulty prevented from infesting the house itself. "Aunt Mary," Mrs. Preston, at her brother's advice, had taken most of her belongings and

gone to the roof of her late husband's kindred in far New Orleans. All the men who "amounted to shucks," as the townsfolk put it, had ridden to Buckner's camp, save three or four whom Northern blood and affiliation held true to the flag. For these latter Belleview was no place, or Asholt either, for that matter. It proudly called itself "secesh to the backbone," mainly because of the doctor's later teachings. And now something or somebody was to be looked up in that neighborhood, which or whom the Union Generals greatly wanted, and Wing, one of the brainiest and best officers of the mounted service yet found in Kentucky, was chosen to go in search, and go with only his own squadron. This meant that there could be no heavy force in that neighborhood, but it might be just one man whose capture was desired, and what man, asked Norman, would be so eagerly welcomed as prisoner as his high-spirited, hot-headed and most influential old father? Could it be that it had become his lot to guide these alien troopers in an attack on his own old home—to indignity, to assault, perhaps, on that honored father's person?

Not one word had the captain vouchsafed as to the purpose of the expedition. For miles that officer had ridden at the head of column, sometimes chatting in low tone with the lieutenant commanding the first platoon, but only rarely addressing a question to their guide; and Norman, schooled at West Point to silence and subordination, aware, too, that every now and then the captain was closely, curiously studying him, rode

on in gloomy silence. He was conscious of a feeling of resentment and of vague indignity. He felt that the fates themselves were leagued against him. It was keenest cruelty that in all the wide fields through which the swiftly mustered armies of the Union were now distributed the fortunes of war should have sent him, a humble private soldier, practically friendless and alone, to guide a hostile command to the very home of his boyhood. Well he knew to whose malign influence he owed this detail! Well he remembered the drive from Belleview to Bardstown, and bitterly he recalled the search for the lost pair in the Buford Woods. Vividly, too, he recalled the question so significantly asked, and guilelessly answered, as to his ability to follow any of these homeward trails, no matter how dark the night. Who but Malloy could have volunteered the information that resulted in this most distressing duty?

And now that, remembering the solemn words of his oath of enlistment, he had with silent self-sacrifice taken the post assigned him, and led the command to the summit of the gap; now that the devious trails were wellnigh traversed, and the pike, broad and straight, lay only three miles farther on, he had it in mind to say to the grim commander that Belleview was only ten miles from the fork of the road—he couldn't miss it—and to frankly set before that officer the pain and distress of his position, and ask if he might not now be permitted to fall out and return to his regiment. With the keen intuition of the sensitive gentleman, he felt that the captain regarded

him with something akin to pity, if not contempt. What manner of man could this be who would guide the invader against his own home, his own people? This was, in words, the question Norman Holt believed to be ever uppermost in the commander's mind. He felt sure that Malloy had given full particulars of his relationship to the master of Belleview. He felt misjudged, misunderstood, yet almost helpless. Ask of him almost any duty but this, and, even without the solemn obligation of his oath, he would not hesitate to do it. Ask even this supreme test of his loyalty and devotion, and because of that oath, and only because of it, he could not refuse to comply.

Disowned by his kind and kindred, Norman felt that he should be accorded the respect and sympathy and support of all true Union men, yet here was an officer, whose reputation for ability had already begun to reach the ranks, whose manner plainly indicated that he looked on the young Kentuckian as one of the hapless results of a civil war, a man, ostracized of his own kind, become a guide and helper to their enemies, a man that, even when rendering invaluable service to the cause of that enemy, could command its pity, perhaps, but never its regard. That the noblest and purest motives actuated Norman's adherence to the Union, and that only a combination of adverse and unforeseen circumstances brought him to this unenviable plight, Captain Wing could not be expected to appreciate. In fact, that was about the last thing Mr. Burnett Malloy permitted him to think of the lone Kentuckian. Neither he nor

the new colonel had aught to say that would have led the captain to imagine of his guide that he was a gentleman, fine and sensitive in nature as any he had ever encountered in his life.

Gruffly Wing had asked if there was a point in the range from which the country toward Belleview could be scanned. Holt, as briefly, answered, "A hill just to the left of the road—at the top of the pass."

"Tell me where to halt the column and lead me up there."

And now, just after twelve o'clock, on this still December night, three men, two in cavalry undress, the third in coarse, ill-fitting, contract garments, and all muffled in the blue overcoat of the line, stood gazing southward over a black void. Above was spread an almost cloudless, spangled sky. Beneath lay a plain, apparently dark, unmeasured, unrelieved by the twinkle of a single light. For a few moments the two officers swept with field glasses the southern horizon, as if in hopes of finding a farm or cottage window illuminated, but all was dark as the grave. Finally the captain turned upon the silent guide.

"About which way is Belleview from here?"

Holt glanced aloft at the stars, then pointed east of south. "Off yonder," he said.

"Then from here on we'll send forward a little advance guard," said Wing to his senior lieutenant. "I shall have to ride with them, and you keep half a dozen men strung out between the advance and the squadron so there'll be no losing touch and getting off the road." Then he turned

to Holt. "How soon can we reach Belleview, going at steady gait?"

Norman felt the chill of apprehension closing on his heart again. Home, home, his own dearly loved old home, the objective point, and he the guide! It told on his very words and voice when at last he answered. Just as when interrogated by the colonel at the railway, hours back, he seemed to be choking before he could speak at all.

"Belleview is a mile beyond the town. The pike runs through Asholt. To reach the house without going through town would take a two-mile detour—but there's no one there at Belleview but the overseer and the negroes."

"How do you know?" sharply queried the captain, whirling on the speaker. Then, as though recollecting himself, he coldly broke in on the soldier's answer, and, without listening, abruptly silenced him. "However, you can't know. Mount and take the lead. Come on, Fanning!" he added, to his subaltern, as he went sliding down the steep, grassy slope. And Norman followed as one in a daze.

In five minutes the advance was clattering down the crooked wood road, following a dark ravine that led southeastward. Holt, a dim, silent figure, foremost; Wing close at his heels. For some reason the captain kept ever within reach of his guide, riding generally abreast of his bridle. Norman noted it with rising bitterness and wrath, but was not this, too, "nominated in the bond"? Was it not all what might be legitimately expected and required of him in the obser-

vance of that solemn oath? And so as nearer and nearer they drew to the old homestead, the farther away, thought poor Norman, was he driving from all hope of welcome or possession there. At last they emerged from the narrow, cross-country lane and turned southward on the broad turnpike, stretching away like a dull, white ribbon in the dim fairy light through the fringing wall of lofty trees. And now at last he had made up his mind. He could silently bear the suspense no longer. A sergeant and three men were sent forward with orders to follow the highway, but to ride no faster than a brisk walk. It was after two o'clock. They must be at the designated spot by four-thirty at latest, and Norman spoke. "Captain Wing," said he, "I am the son of Dr. Holt, the owner of Belleview. Do you think the colonel knew, when he picked me out to guide you, that such was the case?"

The captain impressively put his right hand on his pistol butt as he placidly answered: "He knew that, and I know more, sir. It will go hard with you if this scout fail of its purpose."

CHAPTER VIII

BEATEN, IF NOT BETRAYED

"Four o'clock by the watch," muttered Wing to his senior subaltern, as the squadron halted and dismounted to rest the horses and reset saddles, "and we haven't seen a spark or heard a sound. The town is hardly a mile ahead." The lieutenant nodded but said no word. He knew his captain's capacity, but respected his peculiarities. Wing liked to do the talking himself. Moreover, he was not in the best humor. He had started on this expedition full of lively anticipation. It was the first chance of really stirring service that had yet fallen to the lot of his squadron. He was chosen to lead a night march to Belleview, and beyond, if need be, and to capture, if possible, certain officers of the staff of General Buckner, sent from Bowling Green to arouse the men of Casey, Taylor, and Greene counties, as the doctor had aroused those of Marion, and to "locate" the rendezvous of several bands of troopers reported as riding to and fro in Central Kentucky, and doing no little proselyting that was not all persuasion.

Wing had been assured by the colonel commanding at Bardstown that Belleview was at this moment entertaining three prominent officers of the Confederate army, one of whom had come

thither under the instructions of Albert Sidney Johnston himself, and that Dr. Holt was at home and keeping open house again for Christmastide at least, safe, as he supposed, behind the curtain of the Hardin Hills. Wing had been furnished with a guide who knew the country by heart, who had been cast off by his family and connections, "not because of the war, but previous misdemeanors," said the colonel, "and the young fellow is not unwilling to turn upon those who had spurned him." Wing started with the highest hopes of success and a low opinion of Holt. He had conceived it to be a wise plan to let the young man know he was not looked upon with favor,—that he meant to hold him responsible if things went amiss. He had found his aversion to the young soldier waning as he noted his quiet, sad, dignified bearing. He had begun to believe there might be two sides to this as to other stories; and still, had he not been warned by the colonel that there was reason to doubt the young man's loyalty? Had not Malloy intimated even more? He had spoken his thinly veiled threat in a moment of impulse, and regretted it almost before the words were off his tongue. It seemed to his inner and better self such a brutal thing, even in war time, to bully a man who could not hit back. Even in the darkness he felt, though he could not see, the pallor deepen on the young soldier's face. He could not fail to note the choke in the utterance, the tremor in the voice, when at last Norman Holt found words, and his sense of burning wrong and injustice was given vent. It was only

by supreme effort that he remembered the rigorous teachings of three years at the Point, and controlled his temper.

"As I have no idea of the object, Captain Wing, I shall not know whether it has failed or not. But no threats are necessary. Although no man in this army has been more a sufferer than I for doing a soldier's duty, yet I shall continue to do it." With that he turned away, leaving Wing to feel the blood climbing to his weather-beaten cheeks. There was rebuke, deserved rebuke, in the soldier's tone, manner, and words. He spoke like a gentleman, and Wing had spoken like a brute. He had been threatened, and, without threatening, had most effectively replied. There was more to this young fellow than Wing supposed, and he was fairly silenced by the unexpected response. And now, when he would have liked to cultivate the youth and draw him out, as it were, and learn something about the county, and the people, he found his guide silent, unresponsive, unforgiving.

By the time four o'clock came and the spire of a church or two and the wooden cupola of the inevitable court-house could be dimly discerned against the southward sky, the squadron dismounted to rest while the captain, his guide, and a brace of troopers stole softly forward to reconnoiter. Wing was wishing he had bitten his tongue before speaking so harshly to a man placed as was this soldier son of a gallant, dismembered, unhappy state. Almost was he wishing that to some other squadron leader had fallen the detail,

for in answer to a plain question Holt said he had reason to know that his father had left Belleview some weeks before, intending not to return. He did not say that which for a moment was trembling on his tongue—that if his father were there the squadron would not be—until broad daylight. Back where the men were resting by the roadside a cross-country track intersected the pike. Follow that either eastward or westward a mile or so, and a southerly trending country road could be found that would take the command clear around the once lively little town and enable it to enter Belleview, and it was when they reached this cross-road that the guide had reined in and coolly said: "Is it your wish to approach Belleview from the east or west, sir?"

"It was my wish to surround it," said Wing. "Perhaps the west would be the better. We could then cut off anybody attempting to gallop away toward Buckner's pickets."

Halted close to the northern skirts of the town, with barns and farm buildings on both sides of the pike, the four sat in saddle and listened.

The night was still, cool, and sparkling. A light snow had apparently been sifting down during the day, for the fields now spread out before them white and fleecy. All about the village was seemingly peaceful and wrapped in slumber. Up to the north, the way they came, the watch-dogs were still barking, for farms lay thick along the highway south of the range. Captain Wing seemed surprised, even uneasy. "I half expected to find cavalry videttes by this time," said he.

"They surely would have them out if the town were occupied."

"One would think so," was the non-committal answer, and then one of the attendant troopers turned suddenly in saddle and held up a warning hand. From under a clump of timber that stood by the roadside not more than one hundred yards ahead and close to the roadside there came the loud, challenging neigh of a tethered horse, and instantly Wing bent forward, gripped with gauntleted hand the nostrils of his charger, and signaled to his party to do the same. One trooper, a trifle slow or clumsy, failed, for an answering neigh had suddenly begun and was as suddenly choked. Then over among a bunch of farm buildings east of the highway a mastiff lifted up a powerful voice and bow-wowed loud and long. Then there were sounds as of stamping hoofs down closer to the edge of the town, and next—all four plainly saw it—a tiny light flickered and flared a minute under the trees, revealing dimly the shapes of two saddled horses, then as suddenly blew out. Somebody, possibly to consult a watch, had struck a light. "That's a cavalry picket sure as death," whispered the trooper excitedly, but Wing turned on his guide.

"Do you know who they are—or from where?" he muttered, in eager question.

"No," was the low, prompt answer.

"Back to the squadron!" ordered Wing in a whisper. "No noise now," he added. And not until well out of earshot was the pace quickened. Yet, despite precaution, one iron-shod hoof struck

aslant upon a stone, and as though from flint and steel a spark flew into space, and Towser's angry yow-yow redoubled. "Those fellows at the roadside must have seen it," muttered Wing. "Trot! Ride ahead, orderly. Tell the first lieutenant to mount and lead the squadron into the cross-road to the west—to the west, do you hear? We'll overtake them later. Halt, now, you other two. We've got to stay here and drive 'em back if any of them come sneaking out to see who we are. Rein out to the right and left—off the road—and keep quiet."

For a moment the only sound along the highway was the dull thud of the orderly's hoof-beats as he trotted swiftly away. Even that was partly drowned by the clamor of the mastiff now scouting the field toward the fence. Norman, silent and stern, reined round behind the captain as though to confront possible comers. He was right. The picket was aroused, and two shadowy forms of riders were soon seen coming cautiously up the pike. Presently voices were faintly audible, and the waiting trio sat with bated breath, the captain with his revolver drawn.

"I tell you I saw the spark and heard the hoof-beat," a low, yet excited voice was saying. "Some fella came down 'long hyuh just to spy and see who we were."

"Well, he's gone now, and we're not supposed to follow single spies all over Kaintuck. I'm goin' back," was the impatient answer in a whang Norman Holt could have recognized the world over. It was the voice of a hostler who

had cared for his father's horses a hundred times at the old Southern inn. The other voice was that of a stranger.

"Go back, if you want to," was the retort. "I don't go till I know more about what was out hyuh. You tell the boys to watch out 'n case I want 'em."

But the stableman would not even ride back alone.

"Th' ain't anybody out this way," said he. "'cep some of our fellas scoutin'. Come back, I tell you!" And Asholt's unstable soldier was obviously demoralized by the mystic terrors of the dark.

"By heaven!" muttered Wing, between his set teeth, half-turning to his silent guide. "If we could only nab these two, without noise, we could find out everything I need to know—and then you wouldn't have to guide."

But Holt neither spoke nor moved. He was listening with painful interest to the tones that, even though unmusical, clownish, spoke to him of old and happy days—of the loved and joyous home. He and the captain were lurking in the shadows of a thick clump of timber on the west side of the road. Fuller, their other trooper, was somewhere invisible, on the other side. The two Southern horsemen were by this time within thirty paces. Being out on the highway the forms could be seen in the faint moonlight. Again the hostler spoke:

"Like as not it's jus' some fella outen' the colonel's escort been to see his folks an' come

around the long way from Belleview." And Norman saw the captain's pistol hand slowly rising, heard a muffled click of the lock, and his heart began to throb and bound. But as slowly the hand was lowered. The captain shook his head. It would only arouse the whole detachment, wherever they might be—only alarm the whole neighborhood, and spoil the scheme that brought him and his ready squadron so far forward into hostile territory. If only something might happen to tempt the two half a mile farther out! By this time the squadron should be in the saddle and filing off the pike into the cross-road. Surely! for now the bark of half a dozen dogs burst upon the ear, and the stranger of the two approaching horsemen impatiently shook his rein and touched spur to his mount. "I must see what's going on to make all that row," said he, and fearlessly cantered ahead, deaf to the entreaties of the hostler, who, reining to a halt, gazed after him in dismay—gazed only a minute, for all on a sudden a revolver was poked in his face and a stern voice muttered: "One sound and you're a dead man!" A practiced hand lashed his wrists together on the cantle, a shadowy figure took his bridle rein, another, pistol in hand, rode on his left. A third trotted away northward, let down a bar or two, and signaled to the trio to follow. Another minute and they were fox trotting through fields to the northwest, away from the pike, and in ten minutes had intercepted the squadron on the cross-road.

"Now, Mr. Holt," said the captain, "guide on,

around town to Belleview, while I pump this bucolic party. If he isn't scared out of his wits he can relieve you."

Another ten minutes, with four-thirty close at hand, the squadron was jogging in column of twos southward through a country lane. Away to the eastward, half a mile, two twinkling lights had popped out from the windows of the sleeping town, but not a sound had reached them. The furious clamor of the dogs had died away. Norman, with a sergeant and three men, formed the far advance, no guard now at his bridle rein. Behind them a few yards came Wing with his trembling prisoner, closely watched. Even though his hands were tied, his tongue was loose. He was ready to tell anything. What Wing wanted to know was who was at Belleview, and he bade the prisoner lower his voice that others might not hear the reply. Only to Wing's listening ear it was audible. Colonel Carrington of General Johnston's staff, Captain Harrod Summers of General Buckner's, and another whose name he didn't know. Was Dr. Holt at home? Certainly—saw him yesterday! Could he guide them by the shortest way to the manor? Certainly, this was the shortest way. They'd be there in less than ten minutes.

Anybody there beyond the doctor and his three guests? Nobody but the escort—'bout a dozen cavalry. Look! There were lights at Belleview now, and, nodding across the field, the prisoner indicated the direction, and there southeastward lay the famous old homestead. What troops were

these in Asholt, and how many, was the next question? Oh, there might be a right smart crowd, a hundred, he reckoned; and now, giving orders that the man should be carefully watched, Wing spurred to the front.

"Is it the first road to the left we are to take? Does that bring us straight to Belleview?" he demanded of the silent guide. Without other answer Norman bowed. "Ride back, orderly," said Wing, a strange excitement in his voice. "Tell Mr. Fanning to close at once on the head of column! My God!" he muttered to himself, "a hundred cavalry in the town, and nothing said about it! What's got to be done must be done quickly." Bitterly now he wished he had nabbed and silenced that daring single scout who had gone northward along the pike.

A trooper came galloping from the rear. "Captain," said he, "Lieutenant Wood says they're rousing up back there in town. He heard a bugle, and we could see more lights. He thinks they've got wind of us somehow."

"The devil you say!" growled Wing, glancing angrily back. Yes, where only two lights had been seen half a dozen were twinkling now, and one or two dancing about like will-o'-the-wisps. "Trot!" he cried. "Pass the word to keep closed and come on! Mr. Holt, I'll have to trouble you to ride ahead here on my left. Ah! Here's the cross-road now. Head of column to the left! Come on, men; we haven't a second to spare!"

Loud rose the clash and clatter of iron-shod hoofs, as the column swept rapidly round the

drive. Then loud and clear rang out the captain's spirited orders. "Move right on, lads! Circle the house—surround it on every side! Mr. Wood, gallop to the stable and nab the guard before they can be out!"

But now was most unlooked-for welcome! All on a sudden from four lower windows rang out the report of carbines, and one poor lad, with a yell of agony, clapped hand to his side and plunged headlong out of the saddle. A snorting, riderless horse went tearing round the lawn. From other windows poured other shots. Furious with disappointment the captain leaped from his saddle, shouted for a dozen men to follow him, and rushed for the massive door of the mansion. They might as well have kicked at a stone wall, and what made matters worse, carbines were now blazing at every window. From some point within the besieged were able to land a few shots among the heaving, swarming dozen at the captain's back, and two more poor fellows went down, pale and groaning. "Try the rear door! Come on!" yelled Wing, and led the dash around to the back of the big Kentucky house. There they met with what at first seemed better success. With a beam for a battering ram, they burst in the flimsy door, and found themselves groping in a pitch-dark hallway, a veritable *cul de sac*, and Wing, raging, ordered his men back until they could get a light.

All this while, as though in a daze, hardly knowing what he did, hardly crediting the evidence of his senses, Norman Holt, flinging himself

from the saddle, was crouching in a little clump of shrubbery within the encircling driveway. He listened to the wild shouts, the rapid shots of the besiegers, and noted the cool, steady response on the part of the besieged. He heard Wing's voice shouting imprecation and orders at the rear of the house. A soldier with a carbine rushed past him, knelt and took aim at the second window from the main doorway, pulled the trigger, and fired, and Norman saw him begin to reload the ill-balanced and almost obsolete weapon, then suddenly drop it, clap his hands over the abdomen, stagger blindly into the little patch of trees, and sink down in misery almost at his feet. Then, in a frenzy of grief and rage, Norman heard his own name shouted from lip to lip. "Holt wanted! Holt wanted! Where's Holt? Captain wants Holt at the back of the house! Quick!" but he stood rooted to the spot. Even for the love of the flag he could not lift hand against his father in that father's house. Then came another cry.

"Mount! Mount! Lively! A hull regiment's coming! Get the captain's horse to him, quick!" shouted a sergeant as he sprang into saddle. Here, there, everywhere now, darting through the shrubbery, men were rushing for their startled, snorting chargers. Up the road toward town rose the tantarara of the trumpets. "Mount, you, or you're a goner!" yelled an officer in Norman's ear. Then he recognized him, and, with a still louder shout, cried out, "Here's the guide, men! Here's the guide! Now, you! You led us

into this scrape, d——n you! Lead us out, quick —and the safest way!" This time a hot muzzle well-nigh burned the soldier's skin, as Fanning laid his revolver on Norman's temple.

CHAPTER IX

HER FACE AGAIN

There was wrath in the Union camp when what had been Wing's squadron dribbled back to Bardstown. It had set forth strong, compact, and, to all outward appearance, confident. Men in the line felt distinctly envious of these troopers who could ride so buoyantly away into the night, bent on deeds that were to teach the foe to repent this invasion of a would-be neutral State. There was no envying of the dejected fragments that came straggling back. First to arrive was the main body, probably a little more than half the original force, led now by Lieutenant Fanning, and bringing with them one prisoner and a dozen different tales of disaster. There was but a single point on which everybody seemed united. Disaster always demanding a victim, the whole blame was rested by them on the shoulders of their treacherous guide, who had purposely led them by a round-about road, had given warning to the enemy's pickets in front of Asholt, and secreted himself in the shrubbery when the attack began. Cowed, said they, by the lieutenant's pistol, he had guided them homeward a much shorter way. (At least, so it seemed, and certainly it took far less time.) But they had left behind them their

brave captain, two lieutenants, and half the men, some killed, some wounded, but all doubtless in the enemy's hands, and had had a terrible ride for it getting back.

Some of the men did not scruple to declare they had cut their way through overpowering forces of Southern horse, who covered the country in all directions. All maintained that a great army was advancing upon them from beyond the Hardin hills, and that the sooner they sought shelter in the fortifications of Louisville the safer they would be. Some few went so far, in fine, as the fortifications themselves, without the intermediate formality of reporting to a commander at Bardstown or other point. But this, too, was very early in the war days, before the Western American had begun to realize that the time had arrived when he could by any human possibility be called upon to obey any other will than his own, unless he felt like it. The armies of the North had yet to learn the lesson of discipline and subordination. The day was fast coming when, as individuals, they could hardly believe they were the same who swarmed into Kentucky during that fall of '61.

It was a rough ride for Wing's squadron, but, just as Wing had foretold, it was going hard with Norman Holt, held to be responsible for the entire failure. He had been turned over, a prisoner, by Lieutenant Fanning to the commanding officer of the Union camp, had been arraigned before that high official the following morning, by which time a dozen more of the squadron had come riding or footing it leisurely

in, saying disdainful things of the comrades who had run away and left them "to fight the whole gang"; but there were no officers with these stragglers, and while what they said as to being left was entirely true, the weight of testimony went against them, as it did against Holt, who had no friend at court, who had not a soul to aid him when accused of deliberate treachery. The one officer to be heard upon the subject was Lieutenant Burnett Malloy, whose influence was "dead against the accused." Of the squadron, Lieutenant Fanning and a sergeant testified that they heard Captain Wing say he expected treachery on the part of the guide, and had heard him warn Holt that if they failed it should go hard with him. There was no one to speak for the guide. The colonel listened in gloomy silence to the statements of the various persons interrogated, and when the brief preliminary examination was over, despite Holt's protestations of innocence and his plea not to be put under guard, orders were issued that, for reasons concerning the personal safety of the accused soldier, he should be sent forthwith to Louisville under heavy escort, there to be tried for his crime. To keep him another hour at the front was simply to invite lynching.

That was a black night in the career of Norman Holt, but no blacker than the Christmas Day just gone by. In bitterness of heart unspeakable he found himself again and again recalling the warmth, the gladness, the hospitality of the Christmas of a year ago, his father's words of wel-

come, his genial toast to one and all—"Peace on earth and good will toward men, and may we meet again, one and all, within these walls another year." Good God! What had that meeting been! What had not loyalty cost him! And to what end—to what good? Only his own abasement!

On a rude platform car, surrounded by armed men, who had heard only the cruel stories at his cost, Norman was jolted back to the junction, and thence northward to Louisville. The dawn of another day was upon them as the party climbed stiffly to the ground in the crowded station yard. He had spent nearly forty-eight hours without sleep, was broken in heart, health, and hope. He felt that fate had arrayed all her forces against him, that now he had killed forever the possibility of his being restored to his father's love and regard. He felt that henceforth he would be considered only as a son who had purposely, stealthily, led these invaders to his father's hearthstone in the hope of capturing and carrying him off a prisoner. Who could have failed to hear the shouts for Holt—Holt, to come and show the way into the rear of the loved old mansion? He had done his duty to the flag he had sworn to follow and defend, against every impulse and at any cost, and now the protection of that flag was denied him. He was treated as a felon and a criminal by those whom he had striven to serve. He had come now to the very point of asking himself whether it were not, after all, a just reward for having decided against kith and kin;

whether it were not wiser at last to renounce the service of the United States and at first opportunity to make his way to his father's feet, and in tears and contrition to beg again his love and trust, to proclaim his repentance, and to seek only to die in the ranks of the South. He was sitting drearily, his head on his hands, when roughly bidden to arise and follow. He was cold, stiff, and sore, but a numbness seemed to be overcoming it all. In apathy he suffered himself to be led away to the quarters of the provost-marshal, once a homestead where his blithe young voice and lightsome step had been welcomed time and again, yet he took no heed. He never seemed to recognize it. They bade him sit and warm himself before a blazing fire in a big, square, troop-littered room, and mechanically he obeyed, falling almost immediately into the same attitude of utter dejection from which they had roused him on the car. But when an hour later they sought to stir him again, some merciful soul having suggested coffee before taking the prisoner into the presence of the provost-marshal, they were powerless. He had sunk to the floor and lay in a stupor that refused to yield even to harsh measures. With scared face the sergeant went out for help, and returned with a surgeon on duty at the hospital across the way. His verdict was immediate, comprehensive, characteristic:

"This man'll never live to be hanged. Take him to the hospital right off."

And so it happened that when the regiment marched with others to re-enforce the command

of old "Major Slowtrot,"* dispatched against the fiery Tennesseean who, leading his men through Cumberland Gap, was menacing Central Kentucky opposite Mill Springs, loyal faces in Company "C" looked vainly for the bright, soldierly fellow they longed to hail as first lieutenant—Private Holt—who, accused of treachery in deliberately misleading a scouting force, giving warning to the enemy and betraying three officers and thirty men into their hands, lay writhing in the grasp of brain fever in hospital. The man whom the company might have considered but small loss, now that they were beyond the reach of those commodities with which his bounty and wealth had so often supplied them, was most unwillingly trudging along with the column and cursing the luck that postponed the trial of Private Holt, on which occasion he had promised himself—and the judge-advocates of the department—he would be present with highly important testimony. At no time had he been over-anxious to come within range of hostile bullet, and at no time had he ever been so anxious to sojourn in Louisville. Strange, indeed, was the turn of fortune that, sending his rival, Norman Holt, to long languishing within hospital walls, brought hither, too, only a few days later, the girl on whose account his hatred of Holt had become so deadly.

Young Lane, stricken down by some kind of camp fever while at the front, had managed to

*The old cavalry pet name for Major-General George H. Thomas.

elude the vigilance of attendants, break out of bounds, and bring on a relapse so severe that it was deemed best to send him back to the permanent hospital at Louisville, and thither he was borne as the regiment marched away. Letters were written direct to Major Lane, judge-advocate of the department, who was stationed East. He could not be spared, but down came his wife and daughter, the mother and sister of the reckless young soldier, and almost the first thing to flit across Holt's returning consciousness was the vision of the face he loved—which looked, yet never saw him at all.

Nor could she be blamed! Severe illness had greatly changed him. Neither Mrs. Lane nor her daughter recognized in the gaunt, haggard, fuzzy-bearded lad, lying so white and still across the big, airy room, the brave-hearted fellow whose welcome home they had attended the year agone. But he saw, knew, marvelled, and importuned the steward for information. "Certainly, that was Lane's folks from Cincinnati, and Lane was very ill, too much so to be moved, and the doctors thought the case most serious. The ladies were come to take him home, but stayed to nurse him." That was what Lieutenant Malloy, it might be shrewdly suspected, would be glad to do. He was anything but fond of hard marching over frosty roads. January was gone when Norman Holt began to feel strength returning to him. He had lost interest in a campaign that brought nothing but misery and misunderstanding, but the sight of her face revived all, or at

least much of all, the old longing, and love brings life and kindles ambition and will and determination.

New cases were coming every day from the front. Other buildings were filling with the sick, though the army entering Kentucky was hardy as any ever sent to the field from first to last of that long, trying war. And when the news came that Buckner had let go at Bowling Green and was falling back to the Cumberland, great was the rejoicing among the Union camps and great were the accessions at the hospitals, for Buckner cared not to be burdened with wounded, and so those too severely hit to be able to hobble were left behind for the pursuing Yank. Among those brought in were two men of Wing's squadron, who had been badly shot in the assault on Belleview, were captured by the enemy, and after a time trundled over to Bowling Green. Now, barely convalescent, these two troopers had been turned over to the care of the division surgeon at the main hospital, and one day, soon after Holt was able to sit up an hour or so, he saw them brought in and noted the queer look on the steward's face as, answering his languid question, that official replied:

"Two of—that squadron that got cut up trying to capture a batch of reb officers visiting at—well, you know more about it than I do, unless everybody lies."

So even here, thought Norman, the belief was general that he had deliberately led that luckless column into ambuscade. It made him shrink the

more from his fellows, yet invested these wounded troopers with keen and pathetic interest. To the young and pure-hearted it is a source of bitter sorrow to be misjudged. With advancing years one gains philosophy, or enforced endurance, with the discovery that life is made up of misunderstandings. Recovery might have been even more remote in Norman's case, however, but for the presence within the same walls, though now in different wards, of these two men whom he longed to meet and assure of his utter innocence, and the occasional coming of this one girl whom he had learned in happier days so fondly to love. At both entrances to his ward, however, night and day there stood sentries with gleaming bayonets. There was only one steward or attendant who seemed kindly disposed toward the lonely patient. Even his fellow-convalescents looked upon him with but thinly veiled aversion, which in his pride he never sought to palliate. The overworked surgeons barely noticed him on their hurried rounds, but this steward took special charge over his case and was apparently bent on getting him to talk, "to come out of yourself," as he expressed it, and, though too sad and worn to feel like chatting, Norman was grateful for the kindliness and interest—grateful that there was one friend of whom he could seek information. It was through this humble soldier he heard from day to day of the gradual betterment in the condition of the wounded troopers, and could also learn the hour at which the ladies were expected to arrive. They spent no more nights by young

Lane's bedside now, but generally came in the morning about nine o'clock, and, passing through the broad corridor close to the open door of Norman's ward, were ushered into the opposite room. The momentary glimpse thus obtained of her was almost the only sunshine that came into his life.

Then, some ten days after their first appearance, fortune favored him in the unexpected way in which fortune's favors generally come. Among the patients in the opposite ward were a few whose fever had resulted in delirium. One night, all on a sudden, with a howl of terror, a poor fellow came bounding into the corridor, and the sentry over Norman's door actually dropped his gun and ran, yelling, down-stairs, frightened out of his wits by the apparition. Two attendants pursued the fleeing patient, leaving their sick to their own devices, and Norman, sitting up in bed, wide awake, was suddenly aware of a haggard young face peering cautiously into the corridor from the opposite door. Away out along the gallery, with much outcry and excitement, the fugitive was run down, and was being overpowered by the rush of attendants. For the moment no one in authority was left in either ward, and it was patent to Norman Holt's keen eyes that here was a patient attempting escape. What was more, even in the changed, haggard face he recognized Theodore Lane.

By this time, too, strength had measurably returned, and excitement lent him more. It was the work of but a minute to slip into the

loose hospital shoes and trousers with which he had been provided, to hasten to the doorway, and there, under the light of the swinging lamp at the head of the stairs, just in time to confront the younger and weaker man, Norman Holt looked squarely into the eyes of Daisy's brother, with only the quiet question, "Where are you going, Theodore?"

It was the voice, not the face, the rattle-brained youngster knew at once, and realized, as he had done time and again, that here was his master.

"Damn it," he feebly whined, "let me out of this hellhole! I *will* go, Holt! You've no right to stop me! You——"

"But I do stop you! Sergeant of the guard!" he called, in low, controlled voice, yet in the old authoritative tone, for he heard the clank of rifle butts and the sound of excited talk below. "A fever patient is loose. Come up here with two or three men."

And the sergeant came, just as the attendants, with their fighting lunatic, struggled back to the corridor. Lane miserably burst into tears and meekly succumbed, being led back without protest or resistance. Then the sergeant stood facing Holt.

"This is a queer streak," said he. "You're no private soldier. You're the only man we are ordered to guard, and here you are acting as guard of the ward when our own was scared off his post. We've got to put on another man, for that fellow's completely demoralized. I'll tell the officer of the day about this to-morrow."

It seemed he did, and that others told Mrs. Lane, and that Mrs. Lane and her daughter begged to be permitted to see and thank the brave young soldier who had so befriended their poor, half-delirious boy. And at ten o'clock next morning, as Norman Holt sat close to the open door, he saw them coming, Mrs. Lane and Daisy, guided by the steward, and bent on their errand of gratitude to this unknown benefactor, himself a patient. And the lad felt his strength going, felt all his nerves quivering, felt as though the room was swimming round, as he slowly found his feet and faced them.

There was a faint, barely articulate cry from the daughter's lips. It was the mother's words that roused the entire ward:

"Norman—Norman Holt! You here? Oh, my poor— We thought—we were told you were—in prison."

CHAPTER X

A RIVAL'S BLOW

The week that followed brought a manifest change for the better in the conditions surrounding the prisoner patient in the Louisville General Hospital. Up to the day he first saw the face of Daisy Lane within these whitewashed walls Holt had little care what happened to him. Weak, helpless, hopeless, betrayed by fate, and abandoned, as he thought, by God and man, he had fallen into such a state of apathy as at one time to give the medical officers abundant reason to regard his recovery as more than doubtful. Whether they thought it the easiest and most natural solution of an ugly question, whether in the midst of manifold cares and cases they thought of it at all, cannot be decided. He was left entirely to himself to brood at will. It was his superb strength and constitution that tided him over the worst days. It was the strong love in his young heart that, thrilling through his whole being at sight of the fair girl who, despite obstacles and ill report, had ever been gentle, even sympathetic, in her manner to him, that now aroused his will and wits and the spirit of fight that was only latent, and so determined him to action. It was his conduct in keeping other patients within bounds instead of seizing

upon opportunity to escape, that attracted the attention of the officers on duty at the hospital and commanded the almost reluctant gratitude of Mrs. Lane. In the first impulse of womanly pity at sight of his thin white face, and while still full of eagerness to thank the soldier who had saved her boy, she had let fall the words that later she would gladly have stifled, and had exhibited a degree of compassion irrepressible at the moment, but injudicious in view of her plans for Daisy's future. Moreover, she saw that the evidence of Norman's suffering had a telling effect upon her child; she saw unerringly the great wave of pity, of pain, bewilderment, even indignation that welled up from Daisy's innermost heart, and realized that all in one moment there was overthrown the work of patient months of undoing at Norman's expense and of worldly promptings in behalf of the absent Malloy.

They had talked it all over, her husband and herself, before the newly made major left for staff duty in front of Washington. They knew and acknowledged Daisy's predilection for Norman Holt, and even mourned that they had felt compelled to cold-shoulder him out of their fireside circle; but, as has been pointed out, Lane worshiped wealth and influence and social station. Lane had made up his mind that no matter which side Norman might espouse, the war would ruin him. Lane knew by midsummer just to the last penny the extent of poor McIntyre's inroads upon the little fortune left in his hands for the benefit of his sister's sons. Lane knew that barely

$10,000 remained to be divided between the two, and later, as the war wore on, was fully informed of the breach between the hot-headed father and his second son. Even though reconciliation were later to come, what would be left of the doctor's estate by the close of the war? Like Virginia in the East, Kentucky promised to be a grappling ground in the West. Who could preserve Asholt from the ravages of battle? What would Belleview's innumerable uncles, aunties, and pickaninnies be worth from a financial point of view by the time the war was ended and the South subdued?

No! The Holts had been for years his most valued friends, his partner's closest kindred, but that beneficent partner was dead and buried now. The fortunes of the Holts must soon follow suit, so what sense was there in sentiment? A man must look out for his own. Here was Senator Malloy, whom he had long looked upon with disfavor and dislike, had indeed so treated him, now coming forward in his bluff, hearty way, "men of the world, you know," as he said, perfectly willing to let bygones be bygones, to forgive and forget his slights and snubs, ay, even to exert his powerful political influence to farther his interests and asking nothing more, apparently, than that Lane should favor the suit of his son. It would have been flying in the face of Providence to deny him, said Lane.

And yet, when he took his little girl in his arms to kiss her good-by as he hurried away to Washington, as he noted how wistful was the appeal in her humid eyes, how piteous the quiver about

her pretty mouth, he knew she was thinking of Norman and mutely pleaded for justice for him. She wouldn't believe Malloy's aspersions! The men would never have elected him their first lieutenant if those stories had been true! The very card Malloy had played turned the trick against him. The news that Norman had gone as a private soldier, cheated out of his commission, had roused her to such a pitch of wrath and woe that for the first time in her life the child had stormed against her parents, had declared them cruel, heartless, wicked, and, bursting into a passion of tears, had fled to her room, banging and locking the door behind her, leaving them gazing into each other's white faces, stunned and aghast.

"We must leave it to time," the major had said, after their long, dreary conference. "It is probably the end of poor Norman, anyhow, and the rest will come later."

The story of the luckless raid on Belleview was not told in full in the press of the day. Like every fiasco, big or little, the first year of the war, "The affair was only a reconnoissance." But Mrs. Lane got all the particulars through the Rays at Lexington, who, oddly enough, seemed to hear not infrequently from Major Henry Clay Holt of the Confederate staff corps. Through them she heard how successfully the work of proselyting had been going on, how vehemently the old doctor had been working, and how hospitably he had entertained the officers detailed for the duty by Sidney Johnston and Buckner, how

the latter had sent two squadrons of cavalry to cover Belleview pending these operations, another to serve as escort for the officers in the lower counties, and still certain other riders, not in Confederate gray, to keep vigilant watch along the front. And so, when Wing's squadron made its essay, based on secret and reliable information of the presence of the party at Belleview, the guard was on the lookout for him—and never did Belleview tender a warmer reception. What nearly broke the old doctor's heart, however—what stunned him, yet enraged him was to find that his own boy, his own little Benjamin, had led the column that came to capture him. "That," said Kate Ray, "is something none of us who know Norman can in the least understand. It sounds incredible. Major Holt seems to feel it as deeply as does his father."

But what Kate Ray did not know and Mrs. Lane did not learn until later, in a letter from Malloy, was that Norman Holt, so far from serving as a guide for the purpose indicated, had played a double game, had treacherously brought about the disaster to the Union arms, and was now a prisoner awaiting trial by court-martial, a prisoner whose sentence might deservedly be death.

And this was news over which Lane himself began to weaken. This was carrying the matter too far. He had meant to remove Norman as a possible suitor, not to slay him as a felon. He read with amazement the story sent by his wife, and in sore perturbation tried to study it out and consider the pros and cons. He could

conceive of Norman doing one of two things in this matter, but could not believe him guilty of playing a double part. He wrote for confirmation of Malloy's possibly biased statement, and got it. The report was true; the charge might not be. Then came the tidings of his own boy's prostration, and then Norman was for the time forgotten.

Meanwhile what could Mrs. Lane do but ask that Norman should be transferred to the ward where Theodore was lying, a much smaller one, where he might receive at her hands some of the care and dainties lavished on her son? A surgeon had come and conversed with the accused patient, and noted symptoms of excitement that led to examination. The cause not being apparent in Norman's personal condition, the doctor sought further and found it—in the fair girl seated by her brother's bedside across the hall. Then an officer from the staff of the commanding general dropped in—an officer who had been on duty at West Point when Norman was cadet sergeant of Company "D." The recognition was instant on part of the young soldier, but he gave no sign. The visitor was shocked and pained to see how the lad must have suffered. Norman's connection with the raid to Belleview was of course known to him—the name was a household word in the army, and the story by this time had gone from mouth to mouth—Kentuckians being sadly and fearfully divided about it. And now Captain Enyart had been sent to see if Norman had nothing to say for himself. The report of his conduct when he could have es-

caped had found its way to headquarters and staggered those who believed in his guilt.

And so there came a day not soon to be forgotten, and a scene long remembered in the general hospital, a scene that, when described to Mr. Burnett Malloy, less than a week later, sent him nearly wild with apprehension and jealous misery. And well it might. Matters were lively at the front, and he couldn't get away. The Army of the Ohio was concentrating at Nashville. It was his own captain who was the narrator, and little doubt was there that "the ould man" enjoyed the privilege and made the most of it. Gaffney had learned to love and lean on Norman. He felt that the lad had been undermined by this smooth, well-groomed, well-provided fellow, whom he both hated and feared—hated for his superior airs and education, but feared for his undoubted influence and power. Oppose him openly or incur his enmity he dare not. Captain Gaffney had not lived long in Irish-American political life without learning from bitter experience the depth of its intrigue. But in common with almost every officer of the regiment, he knew by this time Malloy's aspirations regarding Daisy Lane; though he knew that Norman Holt had been a dangerous rival, and took all an Irishman's delight in twitting an anxious swain.

A long letter had come to him from Louisville, semi-official in character, written by Captain Enyart himself, an officer of the department commander's staff, written to him as captain of

Norman Holt's company, that he might have the latest and fullest and most authentic account of that young and sorely tried soldier's fortunes. It was in answer to one the faithful old Celt had sent, because he could no longer bear the slurs and innuendoes so frequently uttered at Norman's expense by Malloy, and Enyart had written from the fullness of his heart and subject. The first pages the captain kept to himself. The last, with frequent injections of Hibernian comment, ment, he read aloud to his senior lieutenant:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE OHIO,
Office of the Assistant Inspector General,
January 30, 1862.

My dear Captain Gaffney:—I have received your anxious letter and am glad to be able to answer at once. The few lines of inquiry sent you on the 20th, when we were still full of General Thomas's brilliant victory in front of Mill Springs, should have gone more into detail, but this cannot be said of your capital answer. You have covered the whole subject, and your testimony to the faithful and excellent service rendered by young Holt will be of the utmost value should the case ever be brought to trial, which now seems doubtful.

To begin with, it must be remembered that all the outcry against him was made by a lot of badly beaten troopers, who felt they had to account in some way for the failure of the expedition. Then he himself broke down, had no one to speak for him, was too ill to speak at all. Then followed the weeks in hospital, and finally, as the charges were formulated and laid before our level-headed General—(You may not appreciate him now, my friend, but with his apparent coldness and severity the results will show he was the man of all others to make soldiers of this army)—he sent for Lieutenant Fanning and others, and asked how they knew Holt had communicated with the enemy's videttes, how they knew he had purposely delayed the march, and whether they knew

any better road to Belleview than the one he took, except the pike through Asholt, which, of course, would have run them into a hornet's nest. He found they didn't know anything, and that the only officers and men likely to know anything were Captain Wing, First Sergeant Hunter, and Trooper Fuller, all wounded or prisoners in the hands of the enemy. That spoiled the case for the prosecution for a while, anyhow. Then who should turn up but Fuller, found among the wounded at Bowling Green and sent back to the general hospital at Louisville. Meanwhile Holt had opportunity to escape from hospital, and not only wouldn't take advantage of it, as he probably would if conscious of guilt, but he kept others in check; and this, too, came to the General's ears, and he ordered me to go into the case. I had known the young man when he was a cadet at the Point, and he was square as a man could be—a Kentucky gentleman, in fact—and I could not but sympathize with him in his extremely painful and trying situation, forced upon him by the war. He was still so deeply grieved that he could not bear to speak of the matter at first, but denying the accusations in toto, he said that Captain Wing would surely exonerate him, and asked me to see the wounded men in the other ward. And there, as luck would have it, lay Fuller, he who rode forward with him to the edge of the town, and was close by him until after they entered Belleview's gates. Fuller said Holt never had a chance to speak to the enemy, that Wing kept him close to his side, and that Captain Wing himself had ordered the détour around Asholt after finding the village occupied by the enemy. The other men knew nothing.

So there's the case in a nutshell. So far from being blamed by Mr. Fanning for leading them into the scrape, he should be praised for getting them out of it. Had it not been for his presence and knowledge of the road the whole squadron would probably have been gobbled.

You should have seen the picture yesterday afternoon when I went by the General's order to remove the guard and tell him the case was quashed, unless future developments should cause it to be reopened. There in a sunshiny little room lay one of your boys, young Lane, building up from his fever.

There by the bedside sat his mother—you know the family, of course. There in an easy-chair, reading aloud, sat as pretty a girl as man could hope to see, and there, reclining in another easy-chair, was our convalescent, so engrossed in the fair reader that he never saw or heard me until she arose to bid me welcome. I made short work of my errand. "The General orders your release, Holt," said I, "and you are to have furlough to-morrow. Furlough till you're both ready to take the field." And while the mother fell to kissing her boy, will you believe it ("Listen to this now, Malloy," interpolated Gaffney) doesn't Miss Daisy almost shake my hand off, and then, sobbing, "Oh, I knew it! I knew it!" turned to that lucky, lanky, lackadaisical ("Lack a Daisy, is it? That'll be you Malloy, I'm thinking"), long-legged son of Kentucky, and as much as said, Why don't you? Oh, what fools these mortals be! I'd have had her in my arms that instant, but he hung back, flushing, troubled, nervously plucking at the sleeve of his blouse, and finally he blurts out: "But I demand a court-martial! I must be tried and honorably acquitted!" As if Don Carlos Buell's verdict wasn't good enough for any man! So there it stands, and there he stood when he should have welcomed release—and the lady, both—with open arms.

Will write again next week. Yours, with regards,

G. B. ENYART,

Captain —th U. S. Infantry, A.I.G.

P.S.—Sorry you missed Mill Spring. Better luck next time.

Slowly the veteran refolded the letter, his twinkling eyes never quitting their mischievous scrutiny of his victim's averted face. Malloy, seated in a camp-chair, his booted feet to the fire, his delicate white hand nervously twisting his dark mustache, his glowing eyes snapping and shifting, waited until the last word was read. Then deliberately he rose, stretched his arms to their full extent, yawned with ostentatious show of indifference, glanced upward at the sullen skies

and wearily about at the grimy tents, and finally queried:

"Er—who did you say was the author of this ten-page epistle—Captain Enyart? Yes; facile pen, fervid imagination! Step over to my tent, Captain, and we'll, or rather you'll, find the case refilled. Make yourself at home. I'm on guard, you know." And, hitching up his handsome sword, the lieutenant sauntered off toward the sentry line.

"Dash dash him!" swore Gaffney, deep in his throat. "I'll take the starch out av him yet, if only wanst we can get undher fire. An' when Holt comes back we'll see who's the betther man, or I'm not captain of the Emmet Guard."

Soon enough, too soon, perhaps, for his health, Holt rejoined the old company, to find that at a time when every officer was presumably needed with his command, and every application for leave of absence was forwarded disapproved, Lieutenant Malloy, —th Ohio, had been granted thirty days, under orders the stern old soldier and disciplinarian at the head of the Army of the Ohio could not disregard. There was no chance to tell which was the "better man," even on the second day of Shiloh, when old Gaffney went down with a bullet through the leg; for the first lieutenant failed to reach the field until days after the fight was done, and then his first act was to tear up the list of recommendations for sergeants' warrants to fill the few vacancies existing. The new list made no mention whatsoever of Private Holt.

CHAPTER XI

BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER

What had become of Captain Enyart's benevolent plan of sending Holt home with Lane? Early in February, while the Army of the Tennessee was closing in around Donelson, and their comrades of the Ohio were concentrating at Nashville, the doctors pronounced that mother-coddled young scapegrace quite able to travel, and some were so flinty-hearted as to say he might as well travel to the front. Norman, on the contrary, was apparently fretting himself into another fever. Far from taking comfort in the dainties tendered him by Mrs. Lane (who from the very day of the dramatic announcement of his release from charge of the guard had mounted another in the shape of herself, to see that never again had he and Daisy a chance for a word), the lad was nervously eager to see the General commanding, to secure a fair, full trial by general court-martial, and the triumphant vindication he considered absolutely necessary to his soldier honor. Pale, weak, and languid, he had managed twice to go to headquarters, but Captain Enyart had been sent to the front on some important mission. There was no one among the busy officers coming and going whose face was familiar to the tall young soldier in his loose, ill-fitting uniform. Only once he had

speech with an overworked aide-de-camp, who took down his name, company, and regiment, told him it was impossible to see the General, and that, even if he did, it would do no good. A soldier could not demand a trial. A trial could not be held without witnesses. The witnesses were still prisoners in the hands of the enemy, the Lord only knew where, and the best Norman could do was to take the furlough granted him, get a rest, a little strength, and then rejoin his regiment. The aide was not unkind. He was simply bluff, straightforward, and brief. He had to be. Then Holt asked when he could hope to see Captain Enyart. "Back day after to-morrow. Show in the next man, orderly. Now, what do *you* want?" And Norman wearily went his way. There was time for little sentiment in those days. He walked slowly back to the big hospital and painfully climbed the stairs. He had seen but little of that beloved face of late. "Daisy is visiting friends," explained Mrs. Lane. "The air of the hospital is bad for her, and now that Theo and you are doing so well it is best she should take care of herself." If he only knew who and where those friends were it would be easy to seek their home. It would be joy to see her face again. He had even sought to ascertain, but saw plainly that Mrs. Lane fathomed his motive, and meant not to tell. His heart was heavy as his feet as he climbed the stairs to the second floor, and, entering the room her presence had made sweet and sacred, despite the sorrow in his heart, looked blankly about him. There was his cot, there

stood his few belongings, but everything of Theo's was gone!

"The lady left good-by for you and was so sorry you were away," said the steward. "She will write after they get home, and—she left all these for you."

"These" were two or three bottles of wine, and some jellies and tonics and what-nots, from which, in speechless, helpless sorrow, Norman turned away. Unerringly he saw through it all. Mrs. Lane never meant or wished that he should go home with her. They could take care of Theo without his aid. That night he asked the chief surgeon how soon he could go to the front, and the surgeon answered by ordering him back to bed.

And now here he was once more with his old company, but everything seemed changed. Gaffney wounded and gone; Sloan, his friend, and first sergeant, sent back invalided to Savannah; a man the Emmets hardly knew at all made first sergeant in his place, and the man Norman Holt knew to be his unscrupulous enemy commanding the company. "Be on your guard, me boy," whispered Gaffney to him, as, on his way to the front, the young soldier had bent over his wounded captain's cot. "That young man'll thrick you if he can. I'll be back wid the byes in a month. Till then—mind yer eye."

But a month is a long time in the face of the enemy. No man can say what a day will bring forth. The regiment slowly marched on toward Corinth, with the combined armies reorganized

under Halleck, and presently found itself doing picket duty on an exposed flank, its dog tents pitched in irregular fashion along a bare hillside; thick woods surrounding them; tortuous country roads twisting, snakelike, through the timber; a little covering force of cavalry off southeastward toward Iuka; the comrade regiments of the brigade bunched in the woods to their right, and here, in monotony unspeakable, the men from the Queen City were called upon to kill time—their only recreation cards, their only diversion occasional scout, patrol, or long-range skirmish with parties of gray-jacketed cavalry that kept up a perpetual stir along the front; the only knowledge of what might be going on at home the occasional coming of a mail with letters and papers; their only participation in the move on Corinth the hours of listening to the dull, distant booming of the guns. Drills, save by squad or company in the manual, in which the Army of the Ohio was long since letter perfect, were impossible. Life under such circumstances became stagnation. It was tedium to those who had letters and papers from home; it was torment to him who for two mortal weeks had—nothing.

A spell seemed thrown over Norman Holt's sad life in the early days that followed Shiloh. The battle itself was wellnigh done by the time they reached the Tennessee and were thrown in on the left flank just at the last despairing charge of the men in gray. It was all over in a few volleys. The coming of Buell's splendid divisions, drilled, disciplined, and "seasoned," had crushed the hopes

of the Confederate leaders, already shattered by the rally of the blue brigades late the previous day, and by the death of their heroic commander, Sidney Johnston. What there was of the fight for the Ohio lads they took with placid ease, the Emmets alone of the whole regiment showing a disposition to break the line and pitch in for a "Donnybrook" after their gallant captain fell. The stern schooling they had had in Kentucky and on the march through Tennessee had brought them to the front "fit as fiddles." But now came the reaction. With nothing to do but gamble and guard duty the best of men go stale, and the Emmets were not the best. For their new commanding officer they had no respect. He had lost the elements of his popularity. The first sergeant whom he had appointed was obnoxious to the company for that if no other reason, and "the byes" proceeded to make life a burden to him. In furtherance of his determination to be useful, to get ahead, to accomplish something, Norman had offered his aid in making out the company papers, but with odd constraint of manner the new first sergeant replied that he had all the help he needed. Yet one day the adjutant himself came over to Mr. Malloy's tent and swore roundly because the morning report was again all wrong. It was Holt who straightened it out at the sergeant's request. "I—I'd be glad if you would give me a lift," the latter had said, "only I don't want the lieutenant to know." In a dozen words Norman was made to feel that with jealous vigilance Malloy was keeping him in

the background, standing between him and every possibility of preferment. Yet on all occasions Holt showed every outward semblance of soldierly respect, scrupulously saluting or standing at attention in the presence of the lieutenant, a thing few others of the men now ever thought of doing. The Emmets got to straggling all over the country in search of illicit stills or sutler shops. They were perpetually being arrested by patrols. The division and brigade commanders rasped the colonel and the colonel rasped Malloy. "I can't help it," said the last-named officer. "The men are taking it out of me for making Trott first sergeant instead of one of their own Micks. Besides—I'm handicapped as no other company is."

"How so?" demanded the colonel.

"You know well enough, sir," was the answer. "The man they elected first lieutenant is one of their own set. I dare say he's at the bottom of half their devilment, if indeed he isn't worse. He's making maps and writing most of the time. D'you suppose that's for his own information?"

The colonel looked up, startled. He studied the young officer's face awhile, as though still half in doubt. "My knuckles ache yet," said he, "from the rap they got on Holt's account as to that Belleview business. You must be sure of your ground before accusing him again."

"That's why I don't interfere with him. If he thought he was closely watched it would put him on his guard. But now that Buell befriends him, it is making him independent, not to say insubor-

dinate. Presently he'll grow less cautious. Give him rope enough, sir, and he'll hang himself."

And the story that Holt was making maps and writing had foundation. His sore heart turned in repulsion from the low associations of the camp, with its incessant gaming and frequent drink. He welcomed every chance to go on scout or patrol. He welcomed guard and picket duty, held himself constantly ready for service, and in the course of ten days had learned more about the roads, streams, and bridges and abandoned farms within five miles of the camp than any officer in his regiment. He made rough field notes, platted maps, kept a diary, and would have written letter after letter had he had any one to write to, or, saving that, any safe place in which to store his pages. There is no security in the soldier knapsack, and that was all allowed him. He had written twice to Theodore, who had never rejoined the company, but was reported as on detached service in the office of the assistant adjutant-general, headquarters department of the Ohio. Influence had got the lad a "soft billet" while his comrades were afield. No answer came. He had written to Kate Ray, a long letter, telling her his own story of the night scout to Belleview, and begging her for news of those he loved—North as well as South—but as yet no answer came. Not once had Mrs. Lane written, despite her promise. For over three months he had been without tidings of his father and brother, when one soft, moist, yet sunshiny May morning there came news in an unlooked-for way.

It was barely nine o'clock. The dull, distant boom of the guns told that Halleck was hammering away about Corinth. The air was drowsy and still, and camp wore its usual frowsy, listless look. True to old teachings and natural instincts, Holt insisted on keeping his part, at least, of the little tent in order and decency. His mates were Corporal Connelly, a rollicking Irishman, and a quiet, homesick lad by the name of Brennan, both his stanch and devoted friends; both, mainly through his influence, fighting shy of the rough element of which the company was so largely composed; both on the good books of Captain Gaffney and slated by him for advancement; both, therefore, no favorites of Malloy's. The three were busy cleaning their Springfields, for a heavy rain had wet them when on patrol the night before, when they were suddenly aware of some commotion in camp. Three officers, mounted, followed by orderlies and a little escort, came trotting briskly through the heavy red soil of the country road that skirted the field. The colonel's orderly was double-quicking to keep up with the foremost. They wanted Lieutenant Malloy, who wasn't at his tent. "Never mind," said the leader, impetuously, "where is the first sergeant?" And in answer to the question, given in a high-pitched tenor voice, Company "C" to a man dropped whatever it was at, cards principally, and poked its frowsy heads out into the sunshine.

There sat in saddle—his horse, impatient as the rider, switching nervously about—a slender, deep-chested, little man, with snapping black eyes,

close-cropped black hair and beard, a prominent nose, and a queer combination of costume. He wore a slant-peaked forage cap, pulled down over his forehead, a snug-fitting, single-breasted uniform frock, every button in its hole, the usual red sash, black belt and sabre, with dark blue riding trousers tucked into high boots, but on his shoulders gleamed brand-new silver spread eagles on the yellow straps of a colonel of cavalry. Evidently he had just stepped from the grade of captain to that of colonel, and there had not yet been time to get the double-breasted coat. Every man in the Emmets spotted him for a "regular" at the instant. Some even went further and declared him "thrue blue," which meant green as the sod they swore by.

"Sergeant," rang out the high tenor, as that non-commissioned officer came hurrying from his tent, thrusting both arms at once into the roomy blue blouse, "I want a guide. The colonel says you have two or three men who know the country south and east. Who knows it best?"

Trott glanced about him. The lieutenant was not in sight and hearing. The answer was prompt and with a salute.

"Private Holt, sir."

And at the sound of his own name Holt dropped the Springfield and stepped forward through the muddy company street.

"You the man?" snapped the colonel. "Can you ride?"

Norman felt almost like smiling. "Yes, sir," said he, hand at cap and heels together.

"Dismount one of your men, captain. Come just as you are, Holt. We won't be gone an hour. Tell your captain it's all right, sergeant. It's the general's order. I'm—my name's Sheridan," and evidently the speaker had not yet become accustomed to the new rank. In two minutes the little cavalcade, a squadron in all, had disappeared in the woods to the southeast, and for twenty minutes nothing more was heard of them. The Emmets drifted back to poker and camp politics—then presently came scrambling again into the company street.

Somewhere out to the southeast, not more than a mile away by the sound, there burst upon the moist, heavy, sodden air the sputter and crackle of musketry. Colonel Sheridan had stirred up a hornet's nest.

And then it was a sight to see the stir and excitement in what had been so short a time before a dawdling, listless camp. Cards and counters were thrown to the winds. Never waiting for orders, but with the instinct for battle that seems born in the American soldier, the men sprang to their tents, hastily donned and buttoned the coarse blue blouses, whipped from peg and ridge-pole the broad leathern belts, with the cumbrous old forty-rounder cartridge box, ducked into the black loop till it settled on the left shoulder and clamped it to the waist line with one snap of the belt plate. A shift with the right hand swung the big box to the right buttock, another slid the little, fleece-lined cap pouch snug to the plate, another set the bayonet in its leath-

"TELL YOUR CAPTAIN IT'S ALL RIGHT, SERGEANT. IT'S THE COLONEL'S ORDER."

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ern sheath well back of the left hip, and then, grabbing the long, gleaming Springfields, sixty men to the company still, the Ohio boys gathered in the muddy, sloping street of the camp, awaiting orders and listening eagerly to the sounds from the front. Six months back and every drum in camp would have been banging the long roll, but all that nonsense had long been blasted out of the army of the Ohio. "Fall in!" growled the first sergeant of the right center company, as he saw the adjutant come out of the colonel's tent on a run. "Fall in!" flew the order to the wings, and even before the captains could reach their stations, the men were at "front" and "support." Young Scarcliffe, second lieutenant of Company "C," with his frayed crimson sash trailing, unlooped, in the mud, came leaping the puddles down to the line, looking anxiously about for his senior, but no Malloy was to be seen. "Went over to brigade headquarters," sang out the major, as he stood hauling on his gauntlets and swearing at his black hostler's clumsy efforts to set the heavy saddle on a snorting, plunging, excited beast. Away up the slope, opposite the right wing, the drums and fifes began rattling a call, and before it was half finished the powerful voice of big Bob McGraw, captain of the color company, rang out the order: "Company, left face! Forward, double quick. March!" It was adjutant's call, and in another instant ten stout companies, by the flank in sets of four, were dancing out to the regimental line. "By the left flank, halt! By the right flank, halt! Guides out there, lively!"—the orders leaped

from wing to wing, drowning for the time the sounds of the battle at the front.

A keen regiment on drill was the —th Ohio, masters of the new light infantry tactics, envied and maligned and snarled at by their brigade and division mates because of it, but proud as seven hundred Lucifers of their snap, style, and celerity. The colonel came galloping out full tilt to the front of the line. The color guard, with their monarch of a sergeant standard-bearer in their midst, came down the slope through camp on the run and squeezed into line, breathless, between the solid wings. "Guides posts!" squealed from the right the shrill voice of the adjutant, while the commander, impatient of further ceremony, whipped out his long blade in sweeping circle that nearly sliced off the left ear of his steed, and bent his own to the aide, who from a sputtering gallop had reined up in a shower of mud at his stirrup, while six hundred muskets quivered in the bare brown hands, and the long line held its breath to listen. Then away shot the staff officer back to his brigade commander. Then down came the musket butts on each broad brogan rather than in the mud, in response to the colonel's hoarse "Order arms! Adjust your equipment now, men. In place, rest!" And a whole regiment turned and looked behind it at the column of cavalry squashing and spattering down the wood road and heading for the gap in the forest toward the sound of the shots, now dying away in the distance. Whatever it was that Sheridan had struck it was getting the worst of

it, yet fighting savagely, sullenly, in retreat. Little by little the sputter of rifle and carbine grew faint and far, and less and less rapid, until silence followed on the heels of the fight, and the Emmets began to itch to get back to poker. By this time Mr. Malloy, very trim and natty in garb, had reached his post and relieved Mr. Scarcliffe on the right of their front rank. "What was it?" he called out to his chum, the aide-de-camp, as that young gentleman, riding back from the trail of the cavalry, came trotting up the field.

"Scouting party of rebs. Sheridan got wind of 'em somehow, and went out and surprised 'em. Bagged some game, too."

The brigade commander, with three of his staff, came leisurely riding out into the open field in front. He shook his head in response to the colonel's query whether he should dismiss, but assented to the proposition that the regiment be moved to higher ground along the road where they could stack arms, and, with the ease of an old tactician, the commander swung his six hundred into column, and presently, by division in mass, had it compactly grouped, with stacked arms, just as a little party emerged from the woods to the southeast, and came slowly, painfully, up the muddy road.

"Prisoners—prisoners!" the word was passed from lip to lip, and with eager curiosity necks were craned and the men edged from their places until warned back by orders. But the Emmets, with the Tenth company, were close to the road and could see without stirring. First came three

or four troopers of a Michigan cavalry regiment, a sergeant in the lead. Then three dismounted troopers guarding a little squad of five mud-stained, weather-beaten, sallow, silent fellows in dirty gray, to whom little attention was paid, because, just behind them, mounted, but with his left arm slung, and bleeding still, escorted by a lieutenant of cavalry and guarded by a sergeant, came a tall, dark-eyed, distinguished-looking young officer, bareheaded, pallid, dignified, dressed in the full uniform of a major of the Confederate army.

The General and his staff had ridden forward to the roadside. Many of the field and company officers of the regiment had clustered near them. Other few had accompanied the aide-de-camp to Malloy's tent, barely a dozen rods farther up the field, and there, presumably, some libation was going on. Whatever spirit of chaff or mischief might have prompted the rank and file to audible comment on the appearance of the party was checked by the uplifted hands of the nearest officers, and, in the midst of almost impressive silence, the column passed along the rank, and the lieutenant commanding, pressing forward, saluted the brigade commander.

"Colonel Sheridan sends in these prisoners, General. To whom shall I deliver them?"

"Let them rest here for a moment, sir. That officer looks faint." Then turning his horse toward the group, the commander personally addressed the wounded man.

"I see you are hit, sir. I trust not seriously."

A faint flush rose just an instant on the officer's pale cheeks. "It is—of little consequence, sir," he briefly said.

But the General and a surgeon were eying him closely. Up the slope behind them came another little mounted party, certain officers and men of the Michigan regiment that had hastened out to the support of their chief. With them rode the young Kentuckian who had gone forward with Colonel Sheridan as guide. Nearing the top of the hill he slipped from his saddle and restored his mount to the waiting trooper. It was the General who again spoke. "Who has some whiskey?" and a young officer darted on the run to Malloy's tent, returning presently with a brimming flask, and followed by the rest of the party, some of them wiping their lips. The General took the flask and returned at once to the officer's side.

"Pardon me, major, but you have bled heavily and must be very weak. Take a good pull at this."

It was none too soon, for the stricken man was visibly drooping, swaying in his saddle. Yet he strove to put aside the flask until strong arms lowered him to the ground and seated him on the grassy bank. In respectful silence, even in sympathy, a little party gathered about him. Revived by the draught the wounded officer bowed his thanks, while a surgeon began to make a hurried examination of the arm.

"Your name and station, sir?" said the General presently. "I see you are a major of the staff."

The prisoner bowed. "I am; yes, sir. The name, I presume, doesn't matter."

"And yet is always demanded," replied the General, smiling gravely.

"Then put it down as—McIntyre," was the hesitant reply, as the adjutant-general opened his note-book, whereat Lieutenant Malloy, who was on the outskirts of the party, and who plainly started at sound of the voice, turned swiftly and signaled to a young soldier, unarmed and unequipped—the guide, in fact—who, having just dismounted, was standing talking in a low tone with the first sergeant of company "C." Instantly he stepped forward and stood at salute.

Then the silence in and about the little knot of officers surrounding the seated prisoner was broken, and Lieutenant Malloy's voice, clear and distinct, was heard:

"General, this man will tell you the prisoner's name is not McIntyre."

And, as the General turned in surprise, and the little group opened out to right and left, the wounded soldier in the handsome garb of gray looked up into the quivering white face of the private soldier in the coarse, ill-fitting suit of blue—his own brother.

CHAPTER XII

SHERIDAN'S PROMISE

June had come after a rainy spring. The air was heavy with heat and moisture, the roads with mud, and every man of the gallant —th Ohio bore away a pound, at least, of the sacred soil of Mississippi on each broad-soled brogan when the regiment marched back to Pittsburg Landing, there to take the steamer for parts unknown. Nobody, from the colonel down, knew what was in the wind.

There had been a shaking up in certain brigades, a redistribution, as it were, for the happiest results had not followed from the obliteration of the lines that, until after Shiloh, kept the armies of the Ohio and Tennessee separate and intact. They had been drilled, disciplined, taught on somewhat different systems, and though they of the Ohio had kicked vigorously during the process, and had blasphemed their cold, serene, inflexible chief with Western vim and fluency, the campaign had opened their eyes to the fact that now they looked, moved, camped, and fought more like regulars—far more than did a dozen regiments of the other army, many of which went to pieces in the first day's fight at Shiloh, and had to be licked into shape long months thereafter.

A great military light, prospectively, had been

placed in supreme command in the West and, shouldering aside the conqueror of Donelson and the fighter of Shiloh, and "sidetracking" the soldier who molded and made the army of the Ohio, the new commander took generals and even divisions from the latter to graft into the former, and great was the grief thereat. Corinth was destined to fall before big odds, but meantime certain cavalry commanders of the Confederate side were having fun with our communications. An impudent colonel by the name of Morgan, to begin with, had swooped down on our trains near Pulaski—away back of the fighting line—and raised the devil generally, until rushed in turn by a column from Nashville, wherewith rode and charged two regiments of cavalry, Kentucky Unionists, both of whose colonels were crippled in the headlong fight.

Now, when a man is well whipped, as Morgan was said to be, he is expected to fall back on his supports. Therefore, Morgan should have fled southward. But he didn't. He leaped the Cumberland—northward, into neutral ground—ripped up the railway, and tore open trainloads of officers and supplies away up at Cave City. With the armies of the Tennessee and Ohio afar to the south, this bold raider was carrying the war into Kentucky, taking prisoners in some places and releasing them in others.

Then it was that the new field-marshal shook loose several commands, "borrowed," as the boys had it, from the Army of the Ohio, and shifted them up and down stream to strengthen the force

on the line of the Tennessee. But Morgan rode blissfully back to refit at Chattanooga and repeat the performance, and our friends of the —th Ohio saw not so much as a switch of the tail of the column. They were to hear from him again, however, and in no sportive way—and that right soon.

But the left of the line as it fronted the Southern guns about Corinth had had something to talk of for nearly a week, and that was Sheridan's capture and the dramatic scene that followed. Little they looked that day like brothers, those two tall, dark-eyed, slender Kentuckians, the senior garbed in so handsome and trim-fitting a uniform, the stars and gold lace almost new and untarnished, his gauntlets, sash, belt, all of the finest make and material, his handsome face pale from the loss of blood and excess of emotion, clean-shaven as to cheek and chin, his gaze, one long, steadfast look of mingled reproach, pity, almost contempt. There was no symptom of surprise in the pallid features at Malloy's abrupt announcement, neither was there when, as the officers drew back, the figure of Norman stood revealed in the shabby garb of the soldier of the line. It was he whose thin face, covered with its fuzzy growth of beard, showed instant and intense distress. Not until that moment, it transpired, had he seen the captive. After having guided the squadron and the fiery young colonel to the log bridge over the muddy branch, he was sent to conduct a platoon by a wood path farther up the stream, and so missed the sight when the

reconnoitering party from the Confederate line rode into Sheridan's trap. Pinned under his dead horse the major was helpless, and though the young commander of his escort fought like a paladin and died like a gentleman in the effort to save him, Henry Holt was seized and borne to the rear, deprived of his pistols and a fine French saber he wore, while a dozen "gray-jackets" paid with life, liberty, or wounds for the honor of that day's escort duty. It was Henry who was first to break the strained silence that followed Malloy's words, for Norman stood there choking, speechless, trembling, with the beaded sweat starting on face and forehead.

"There is no need, General. The—officer who has just spoken knows that I gave my mother's name, and that I am Major Holt."

There were gentlemen in the group who were quick to note the significant pause before, and the deliberate choice of the word "officer." There were men high and low in regimental rank who thought it inappropriate, to say the least, that Lieutenant Malloy should be selected to conduct the prisoners to corps headquarters, full five miles away. There were rough fellows who clustered about Corporal Connelly's little tent when the Emmets broke ranks, and talked sympathetically and in low tones to him and Brennan, who stood guard at the closed flaps that Norman might hide and think—alone. Poor lad! He lay there, head buried in his arms, and God alone knew the depth of his trouble. It was good and great to be loyal to the old flag in those stern days. It

called for the best and bravest of every State in the wide Northland. It involved leaving home and loved ones to take up arms and pledge one's life to the cause. But home and loved ones were left in safe hands. Prayers and blessings followed the soldier on his way. Honor and favor rewarded his deeds of valor and devotion, or tears and laurels sprinkled and decked his grave. But it was all different in the borderland. It might well be that he who stood fast by the Stars and Stripes must needs abandon all else, for here lay a soldier scorned by his kith and kin and shut out from hearth and home forever. The night raid on Belleview had rent the last vestige of a tie, stricken his name from the family Bible and the father's will. Not once, but twice now, had he been called upon to guide the column that aimed at the life or liberty of his very own.

It was God's mercy that brought old Gaffney limping back to the front about this time, or the boy's heart might have broken. He had begged permission to see his brother before the latter was sent North. It was the brother himself who refused. He had written a letter, which his colonel read and forwarded, asking only tidings of his father's health and whereabouts, and Henry's cold reply was that that father would never forgive him should he hold communication with his traitor son. Gaffney, in his crude but hearty way, went sturdily to work to bring comfort to the lad. The brave Irishman had won the praise of a fighting division commander at Shiloh, and their "dandy" colonel, who had hitherto seen

little to like in the Emmets' leader, warmed to the fellow who could so splendidly handle his company in battle, even if he couldn't on battalion drill. In plain words Gaffney said it was time a "bye" that had lost so much through his loyalty should gain something by way of reward. "Twicet, now," said Gaffney, "Holt's had to do dewty the divil himself might dodge, with divil a thanks, but kicks, from both sides. Ye—wouldn't even make him a sergeant, bedad!"

"I couldn't," said the colonel, "against the recommendation of the company commander."

"His name was furrst on the list," said Gaffney, "an' that—slick wan, Malloy, cut it off and sticks in Thrott. Is it me or Malloy commands the Emmets, sorr?"

"You, when you're here, captain," answered the chief, with all patience and toleration, for he respected the man's bravery, and, despite all innuendoes and warnings, was beginning to believe his *protegé* an injured, a deeply injured, man. Still, it wouldn't do to fly in the face of Providence and the Governor and adjutant-general and Senator Malloy, all of whom would have it, apparently, that young Holt was little better than a spy. There was no vacancy now among the non-commissioned officers of Company "C," and even Gaffney couldn't expect him to revoke the warrants given in his absence.

"Remember," said the colonel, "we feared it might be months before you could rejoin, and meantime the law made Mr. Malloy the commander. I'm sorry, but I don't see what can be

done. Colonel Sheridan is the man to help him now."

Full of worldly wisdom was the colonel. Well he knew that any recognition he might offer the lad would injure his own prospects with the powers behind the throne, but not a whit did he object to some one else's burning his fingers in the attempt, especially Sheridan. Sheridan was a Buckeye boy himself. Sheridan had begged for an Ohio regiment and couldn't get one, for that young regular had no influence whatever in his own State. Ohio's regiments were given as a rule to Ohio's famous names and favorite sons, and there were scores of them. It was Michigan that saw the soldier stuff in that keen-eyed, short-legged little quartermaster, and set him in saddle at the head of her new cavalry regiment, where, within a week, he was carrying dismay, not only to the enemy, but to comrade colonels on the lookout for stars. Now if Sheridan saw fit to take up the cudgels for Holt, and thereby rub wrong way the fur of Ohio's politico-military clique, so much the worse for Sheridan's chances and the better for his own. Small wonder the colonel so suggested to Gaffney, and "Cap," full of his subject and half-full of poteen (the honest Irishman had brought a cruiskeen—a "kag," as he called it—back to the front), with the aid of a brother Celt on the commissioned list, now composed a letter to the swart little cavalry colonel, and sent it, just as the regiment got the route for the Tennessee and the colonel the news that his plans were all in vain. Corinth was

abandoned by Beauregard. The Michigan troopers got back from a dashing raid to the enemy's rear. The star would probably light on Sheridan's shoulder, and away he would go to the head of a brigade. Ohio's neglect had proved a blessing in disguise.

The night they got to Pittsburg Landing was dark, wet, and dreary. The colonel was crabbed; the captain was sore. Even the Emmets were still. Tied up alongshore were a number of stern-wheeled packets, some laden with sick and wounded, some with convalescents, some with stores, some with troops, bound, like themselves, they knew not whither. Pine-knot torches glowed at the gangplank of each transport, and staff officers were bustling about. "Got one or two men who can act as clerks to make out some papers, Gaffney?" shouted an overworked commissary from the guards of the *River Queen*.

"Faith, we're all clarks in "C" company," said honest Terence. "Go you, Holt and Brennan. It'll get you out of the wet, anyhow." And the two soldiers were shown where to stow their belongings aboard the packet and quickly set to work in the improvised office. Presently the measured tramp of the men was heard, as the foremost company came filing aboard, and soon the brightly lighted cabin began to fill with officers—some of the Ohios, several of the staff, among these latter the young aide-de-camp so well known to the regiment during the dreary weeks they held down the left of the line. He was talking excitedly, had been reading from a Louis-

ville paper, and every now and then, strive though he might to confine his attention to the columns of candles, soap, salt, and pepper dancing before his tired eyes, Norman Holt could not but catch an occasional word. "Lord, yes. Whisked off the whole carload! Paroled a dozen at Lebanon! Yes, both colonels wounded, Wolford and Green Clay Smith!" Norman's heart sank. How familiar sounded the old Kentucky names! Then came something more startling. "Hullo, Malloy! Ain't you glad your prisoners were taken off your hands at the front?"

"Why?" growled Malloy, for he wasn't at all. He had secretly hoped to be sent on to Nashville in charge of them.

"Why? Lord, man, haven't you heard? Regular jail delivery on the Louisville and Nashville. Whole carload got away, and Major Holt with them. They say Morgan ran them off to Chattanooga. But it will cost Bates his commission. He was officer of the guard, and Buell's ordered him court-martialed and the three sentries shot."

"Sentries shot!" cried Gaffney, aghast. "Ye don't mean it, man! Shure that's—that's barbarious!"

"Can't help it," was the curt answer. "Buell's given warning twice already. There have been too many cases of sleeping on post in presence of the enemy. The articles of war are explicit—the soldier found guilty must suffer death, and those fellows were regularly tried, convicted, sentenced, and now Buell has ordered the sentence executed."

For a moment there was silence. Sentences as

severe had been deservedly awarded, both in the Army of the Potomac and in the West, but some power had interposed to save the victim. The time had come, however, when the soldier had to learn that, harsh, stern, merciless as such sentences might seem, it was just, it was necessary. The safety of the army, the lives of thousands of sleeping men, all depended upon the vigilance of the sentry. Should he fail all might be lost. Death was just punishment for him who slept at the post of duty. Even the plea that drugged liquor had been given the two soldiers in this case availed them nothing. Liquor was the last thing they should have taken when on guard.

A harsh voice at Holt's elbow roused him from the half stupor in which he listened to the announcement of his brother's escape, and the terrible consequences. "Come, young man, don't go to sleep, or six companies will go to bed supperless!" And, pulling himself together with an effort, Norman again applied his wits to the figures before him. Henry escaped! Carried away to Chattanooga! And Union soldiers to be shot—for sleeping on post—failing to give warning—letting him go! It seemed as though he could never complete the copies required. The hour of labor spun out interminably. He heard company after company come tramping aboard until six were stowed away on the *River Queen.* He heard the clanging of the engine bells and the hiss of steam, as the packet slowly glided away upon the still waters of the Tennessee. He felt his captain's broad hand on his shoulder—a sign of

wordless sympathy—and bowed lower his tired head. Then again he strove to go on with the work. Brennan had finished his task and stole silently out to join his comrades and tell the grewsome story, but Norman ruined three blanks to one he finished to the satisfaction of the staff sergeant in charge. At last it was done, and he stumbled out on deck to lean against the rail and let the cool night air play upon his hot forehead. Henry escaped! He could not but rejoice at that. But those poor fellows—two of them—to be shot in consequence! He shuddered, and covered his face with his hands.

Between flat-wooded banks the broad stream was sweeping, the *Queen* floating, noiseless, with the flood. Below, the men had been comforted with coffee and hardtack, and were dozing off on their blankets. In the cabin two or three parties of officers were at cards or chat. Only a few appeared outside. A wooden shelf ran along the rail, a narrow seat, and upon this Norman dropped and buried his face in his hands. He could not yet go below and join his comrades. He craved to be alone if only to think a few moments. Three or four officers, wrapped in their overcoats and sprawling on big chairs or on blankets on the deck, were sensibly preparing for possible work on the morrow by sound sleep at night. There was no one to say him nay, at least there was none when he first appeared, but presently the door to the cabin opened and the form of a young officer came quickly forth. The door slammed after him, and he stood at the rail

alone. Then, in a moment, as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, he glanced about him at the two or three recumbent forms on one hand, at the lonely, seated figure on the other. A moment more he stood irresolute, then stepped quickly to the latter and laid a heavy hand upon the shoulder. Norman looked up instantly, rose quickly to his feet and stood at salute.

"You know perfectly well, sir," said the officer, in cold, cutting tone, "you have no business here. Go below, where you belong."

A lump seemed to spring to Norman's throat. He essayed to speak, but no words would come. Silently he faced about, and obeying the menacing, pointing finger, moved wearily to the stairway a few yards forward. At the foot he encountered the sergeant-major. "Just looking for you, Holt. Report to the colonel in the after-cabin at once," were the staff sergeant's crisp words.

The shortest way was up the stairs again, and in a trice he stood upon the deck from which but the moment before he had been so summarily ordered. There stood the officer, his first lieutenant, his back toward him, busily tearing a sheet of paper into fragments and throwing them carefully overboard. Dim as was the light, Norman could see with sufficient plainness that a letter of size was being reduced to scraps.

But why should Malloy start and grasp the little wooden pillar of the covered way as he turned and faced him? Norman could have sworn he was livid, trembling, and the voice with which

he spoke was harsh and shaking with mingled wrath and dread.

"I—I ordered you below, sir. How dare you disobey?"

"The colonel orders me back," was the reply, as the dark eyes, mournful, but burning with a sense of indignity and wrong—lighting, too, with strange interest at sight of the other's evident alarm—gazed straight into the steely blue. "May I be allowed to pass?"

For a moment Malloy stood as though halt minded to again speak, but a door opened at the instant, Gaffney's jovial brogue rang out on the night. "Shure, I'll find him at wanst, colonel. 'Twill be glad news to him—as it is to me."

"Damnation!" muttered Malloy, as he turned and hurried away.

A moment later and the tall young soldier was standing at attention, cap in hand, in front of the colonel, who, seated at one side of the cabin, his adjutant standing by the sofa, and other officers grouped about him, leisurely looked up from the papers he held in his hand.

"Holt," said he, "I have a letter from Colonel Sheridan, one paragraph of which will interest you. He thanks us for the prompt support given him the morning of the 27th before starting on his way to Booneville, and says that but for his guide he couldn't have nabbed the rebel scouting party with their important papers, and, referring to letters written;—ahum—m, written, hum-m—in your behalf, says: 'I have heard so much in favor of that young soldier and was so well impressed

with him that I have written urging his being commissioned a first lieutenant in my regiment. He may look for it before the middle of July.' "

But before the middle of July the young colonel had stepped up to the stars and said good-by to the Second Michigan. Before the middle of July Norman Holt was a prisoner under guard, ordered to face a general court-martial—on trial for his life.

CHAPTER XIII

ASLEEP ON POST

Under the burning summer suns, over the glaring pike, powdered and choked by limestone dust thick and thirst-provoking, shedding their knapsacks whenever they dared, and wondering where on earth they were going and wherefore, the Buckeyes, with the Emmets at the tail of the column much of the way, tramped wearily eastward through a landscape that under other conditions would have charmed the senses with its beauty. Beauregard having abandoned Corinth and scattered his forces—many going to strengthen Bragg about Chattanooga—it behooved the Union leaders to look out for the approaches to Nashville and to take measures to check those enterprising troopers, Messrs. Forrest and Morgan, who skipped through the South like the Irishman's flea, and were here, there, and everywhere among our communications. It was away toward the fag end of June that the men of this hardy, seasoned regiment, including that hard-swearing company, the Emmets, found themselves camped near the railway, with Tullahoma not too many miles off to permit of occasional sorties, by squad, armed only with canteens; and here were they bidden to watch the road, guard the railway bridge, and see to it that Johnny Reb didn't

rip up the rails or burn the Howe truss right under their regimental noses.

Then two companies were sent up the track to look after the bridge at Frenchman's Creek, and two more across the right of way to protect the stone arch that carried the pike over a brawling little mountain stream that came tumbling from the Cumberlands. Then a division General had to part with the cavalry squadron detailed as his escort—and we had not a few alleged generals who conceived that cavalry had no higher use or function—so the Buckeyes had to furnish two more companies as headquarters guard, the penalty for being second only to the regulars in point of set-up and style, and that left four companies to protect four miles of track, and the pleasing occupation of damning general officers in general and one in particular for everything indecent he could think of. When a man's whole ambition is set on winning the star and the yellow sash, it is trying to command, instead of four regiments and a battery, only four companies and a band. Colonel Pride had done his best to "stand in" with his state officers at Columbus, and labored to make his regiment everything it should be in point of drill, discipline, and efficiency. He had counted on Buckeye backing to make him a general a month back, but the star had not come. On the contrary, it would seem that, in spite of Ohio, it was going to Sheridan, for the story was all over the army already that Halleck had recommended the short-legged, snapping-eyed little

quartermaster for a generalship before he had been colonel of cavalry more than a month. It was rough on Pride, who held that Sheridan owed his first success to the advice and counsel he got from the Buckeyes, and the only recognition they were to get was a letter of thanks and a commission for Private Holt.

It was time, by the way, for that commission to be along, thought Pride, and so said old Gaffney. So, too, said the Emmets, who were, as they put it, "rejoiceful" over the news, and, unbeknownst to Norman, had clubbed together, subscribed a goodly sum on paper to be collected at pay day, and had gotten "Cap" to send an order to Louisville for as handsome a sash, belt, and sword as money could buy. "Cap" was far from well. He had rejoined too soon, and had limped half across the State of Tennessee, ambulance scorning, and now the Shiloh wound was giving no end of trouble again, and the doctors ordered him into camp hospital, which once more threw Malloy in command of the Emmets, and that wasn't the best thing that could have happened to Holt.

With every day now, however, Norman had been gaining in health and strength, for hope is a noble tonic. He had won a friend worth having in that little colonel of Wolverine cavalry. He felt sure of Enyart's interest. He had received a warm-hearted letter from that gifted young staff officer, written at Nashville, on his way again to the front. But there was one paragraph in it that gave him mingled joy and concern. "My orders

took me to Frankfort, Harrodsburg, and Lexington, but I did not get nearer to Asholt. At Lexington, however, I met some warm friends of yours, the Rays, and Miss Kate was especially cordial in all she said of you. Her letter, however, told you all I could, and more."

Her letter! Norman had received no letter, and his heart had been sore indeed over her silence, for if Kate Ray would not answer him he was truly friendless in his native State. There had been a dozen packages of letters and papers for the Emmets since they left the line at Corinth, but never a word for him. He asked Trott, the first sergeant, if he had seen anything, and Trott's answer was, "Nothing since Pittsburg Landing," where several sacks of letters and papers met them as they boarded the *River Queen*, and Trott remembered distinctly there was a letter for Holt—a thick letter addressed in a lady's hand. There were some for Brennan, too. The boys were all "crowding round" when the bag was opened on the lower deck, and some one of them—he forgot who—said Brennan and Holt were working at commissary papers in the cabin above, and he would take them up. Later Corporal Connelly recalled the same thing. He was on guard and couldn't go. "Let's see, who was it took them? Why, yes, it was Lynch—him that was Malloy's striker," and Lynch had long since been sent back to Nashville, sick of a fever. Brennan was questioned. Yes, Brennan got two letters that evening on the *Queen*. Some fellow handed them to him. It wasn't Lynch. It was the commissary

captain's clerk or sergeant, he wasn't certain which.

Then there had been a letter, a thick letter for him, and from Kate Ray, and he never got it, nor could he find the man to tell what had become of it. He went and notified Gaffney of this new trouble, and Gaffney could only sympathize and regret, but when Norman returned to camp he was approached by Sergeant Trott and awkwardly informed that Lieutenant Malloy ordered that hereafter he apply for permission before he ventured to go so far from his company. As the Emmets were far-reaching foragers and given to exploring without consulting their first lieutenant, this seemed an invidious distinction, but Norman silently accepted it all. It probably would last only a short time at most. Both Colonel Pride and Captain Enyart were confident the commission would come within a few days, for the former had secured the favorable recommendation of General Buell himself, and, as Buell was more apt to criticise than commend the appointments in the volunteers, that was considered a feather in Norman's cap and a slap at the State officials at Columbus. There had not been lacking mischievous flings at Malloy when the matter was first noised about the regiment. Some of his brother officers made the mistake of twitting him or trying to, but the man who had shown such agitation and nervousness the night on the *River Queen* was as placidly unconcerned, to all appearances, as he had been the day Gaffney read him Enyart's desrciption of the scene at the hospital.

Only one thing did he say that could be construed into a reflection on the proposed appointment and those who advocated it. "So General Buell has urged it, has he?" pensively spoke Malloy, with something that could hardly pass for a smile, yet not be called a sneer. "Well, it isn't the first time that gentleman has been pronounced a Southern sympathizer."

But while preserving an unruffled front toward his associates it was observed that Lieutenant Malloy's letters to his father redoubled in length and frequency for the fortnight after they left the *Queen*. "He'll thrick ye if he can, me boy," said Gaffney. "Faith, I wish you were an Irish democrat 'stead av a blue grass loyalist. Then there's nothing could bate ye out av it."

Then all of a sudden guard duty became doubly hard. The visits to Gaffney were stopped, and the Emmets were swearing over having sentry, picket and patrol every other night, and being at last kept within bounds; not so much from restraint from within as pressure from without—the whole country became suddenly alive with gray-coated cavalry.

One still night the last week in June a little picket post—four men of the Emmets—was thrown out some four hundred yards up-stream from the nearest supports. The brook, after swirling and foaming down a thickly wooded ravine, opened out over some leafy shallows, where the trees overhung the placid pool. A little foot bridge had been built across the stream at the point where it narrowed again, and went meandering through

a charming landscape southwestward on its long, winding way to the Tennessee. Farm lands, houses, and buildings dotted the billowing surface here and there toward the railway embankment to the west. The white tents of Pride's four companies gleamed in the sunshine close to the wooden truss bridge that bore the iron way across the swirling waters. Parallel with the railway, and five hundred yards east of it, ran the dingy line of the pike, while, still farther toward the foothills, at the fork of two wood roads, a good three-quarter mile from camp, stood a little frame church where famous Ethiopian preachers ofttimes exhorted in the past, and where now a rude soldiery stacked arms without and spread blankets within. It was the post of the reserve of the picket guard of the Buckeyes, the post from which the supports were thrown out, fanlike, through the woods; and on this night in June, soft, still, and sensuous, half the Emmets were covering that southeastward front with Lieutenants Malloy and Scarcliffe in command. "Use the utmost vigilance," were Pride's stern orders at nightfall. "That is where they'll try to break through, if through anywhere, and we want no reb cavalry running off our fellows in rear of the line."

The Emmets were tired and worn. There had been an alarm the previous night, and a long reconnoissance. Some of them had not slept six hours in thirty-six, and felt seedy in consequence. After midnight, when Corporal Connelly should have relieved Private Darcy at the foot bridge, it was Brennan's turn, and Brennan was sleeping

soundly and as wearily as a tired child. He had been failing strangely of late, and seemed far from well. "Let him sleep, Connelly," said Norman. "I'll take his turn. Then if he's all right at three he can take mine. If not, I can stand it." And so it was Connelly and Holt that went forward toward one o'clock and found Darcy crouching by the north abutment of the little bridge and more than glad of their coming. "I can hardly keep my eyes open," said he, "an' I haven't seen nor heard a d——n thing 'cep that time I whistled. Cavalry ain't coming up to no foot bridge."

"No, but cavalry can ford these shallows easy enough. Same old signals, Holt. Take your post." And away went the corporal with Darcy stumbling alongside, leaving Norman to himself again.

It was as breathless a night as the young soldier had known in the whole campaign, and the day had been almost insufferably hot. Somewhere toward noon there had been a lively stir along the picket line west of the railway, where a valiant regiment of Hoosiers held the ground. For twenty minutes the crackle of musketry had been so brisk as to bring the brigade into line, and later to cause patrols to push forward all along the front. They found three dead horses, but the visiting troopers had left nothing else beyond a favorable impression and a written promise, tacked to a tree at the bend of the pike, to "call again in the near future." Then a squadron of Kentucky horse pushed out on each of four southward leading roads, and for two hours

rummaged the woods without finding a thing, the pickets meanwhile being alert and eager. But just about supper time, away to the left front, the southeast, the explorers stumbled on a stronger force, had a sharp set-to with sabers and Colts, and then had to give way. After that all was quiet again from sundown to midnight, save only the mournful plaint of the whip-poor-wills, but even they had ceased as the night wore on. "Johnny Reb is as tired as we are," said Scarcliffe, when visiting the outer line of pickets at midnight. "Johnny Reb is never so much to be dreaded as when he is still," said the colonel, as he, too, made the rounds on his ambling charger. "Watch for all you're worth, men, and whatever happens hold your ground as long as you possibly can."

Every caution spoke of the need of sleepless vigilance. The covering force was small, but all that could be spared at the moment, and, as Pride said, enough to stand off double their weight. The General had faith in the Buckeyes and he didn't spare them.

It is one thing to pace up and down a beaten path and be alert and vigilant. It is another to crouch or lie upon some grassy bank, and, keeping one's self hidden from possible foe at the front, to also keep wide awake. Away to the east, up-stream, the drowsy plash and murmur of the waters fell in soft monotone upon the ear. From time to time some swift-winged insect beat the heavy air with soft, humming sound that steeped the senses like an opiate. Over the bosom of the

waters, in noiseless flight, swooped and circled a brace of bats, and once in a while, answering some imperceptible breath of the night, the reeds and rushes under the bridge, the thick foliage in the overhanging trees, stirred with languorous murmur, and the lone sentry found his eyelids closing with heaviness. Twice he shook himself awake; twice he half rose, and, crouching still, moved noiselessly about in effort to banish the perilous temptation. Toward three o'clock Mr. Scarcliffe again came creeping up the narrow pathway from the picket, and there was a brief muttered conference. "I thought you'd be on later, Holt," whispered the lieutenant. "Just before dawn is the dangerous hour. That's why we had you on third relief."

"I'm taking Brennan's place," was the answer. "He's played out. If you wish, I'll stick to it until sunrise. There hasn't been a sound thus far." And Scarcliffe went back to the reserve and said the foot bridge was all right anyhow, with Holt there till sun up, whereat Malloy, pacing nervously up and down in front of the wooden church, whirled about and asked how that could be, and was told.

A little later the senior officer of the guard called up the sergeant of the reserve and bade him send two men to camp with orders to bring out between them a kettle of coffee, as hot as possible. They were back in half an hour or so, and Malloy, after seeing coffee distributed to the waking men of the guard, told the carriers to follow him out to the supports and pickets, where

men also drank the comforting cup, and went about their duty refreshed, thankful to the officer who at times seemed so thoughtful. At Connelly's picket Brennan still slept the sleep of weakness and exhaustion, so they did not rouse him. But the corporal and Private Darcy were glad of a steaming mug and a nibble of hardtack, and then Connelly bethought him of Holt, one hundred yards further out to the front at the edge of the water. "Oh, certainly," said the lieutenant, "by all means, and to the other sentries up and down stream."

"They come in now, sir," said the sergeant. "Only Holt stays—doing double duty to-night."

"Then carry him a couple of hardtack and give me the biggest tin cup you've got," said Malloy. "Lead on, corporal."

It was then about quarter of four. Away out to the south and southwest the night seemed to be waking up. The distant bark of watch-dogs broke the silence, and in the forest beyond the stream a lone whip-poor-will had again roused and was pouring his weird plaint into the drowsy ear of coming dawn. So absorbed seemed the sentry in something at the front that not until the visitors were close upon him did he note and mutter challenge. No "honors" are rendered on the outer line by night or day. Officer, non-commissioned officer, and private sentry crouched together. "Heard anything—seen anything?" whispered Connelly.

"Two screech-owls began about ten minutes ago. They seemed to have piped up very sudden-

ly," was the muttered answer. "And twice in ten minutes I have heard hoof beats across the stream, but one can see nothing."

"Here's coffee and hardtack the lieutenant brought out to the boys," murmured Connelly. "Drink. It'll freshen you up." And eagerly Holt received the big tin cup at his hands, as Malloy had passed it, and took a long deep draught.

There is nothing that so clears and refreshes on long night duty as "soldier coffee" when properly made. It sent a grateful glow all through his tired body and rendered his senses again keen and alert.

"I think the officer of the picket should hear these sounds for himself," said Holt, as he listened again with straining ear. Since the night on the *River Queen* not once had words been exchanged between him and the lieutenant commanding. Holt had neither forgotten nor forgiven the harshness of the officer's language, nor the enmity which he well knew had prompted it all. But patience—patience was the word! One false step now would place him in Malloy's power. One bar on the shoulder strap that would come with his commission would make him Malloy's equal in rank, and then would Malloy be made to answer. Meantime, soldier subordination must never be forgotten for an instant.

And as they crouched there listening and with beating hearts, again the weird cry of the screech-owl arose on the still air. Again was it answered well over to the right, and from somewhere along the opposite bank, but to the east

of the bridge, there came the impatient neigh of a horse. Then again all was still. Five, ten minutes they waited, and not a sound was heard.

"If I might crawl over there," whispered Connelly, "I could see or hear better. Whoever they are they keep away from the front of this foot bridge. They must know it's guarded."

"I was thinking of that," answered Malloy, in muttered tone. Connelly was a company favorite, a man to be considered, not bluntly ordered about. "I should like to know whether they are lining up in those woods yonder, just as they did at Shiloh, when they jumped into the Army of the Tennessee. Do you think—could you crawl out there one hundred or two hundred yards—maybe?"

"Whatever you say, sir," was the prompt answer of the Irish lad. He never yet had shrunk at a "dare." It was Holt who would have opposed—Holt who strove to speak, but was silenced by the instant answer:

"Then try it, corporal. It'll be a feather in the Emmets' cap if we can discover and balk their move. Keep sharp lookout, sentry. Be ready to back him if he needs help. I'll slip back and bring up some men."

With that Malloy backed cautiously toward the shrubbery behind them, while Connelly, crouching low, stole out upon the narrow foot bridge and was speedily lost to sight in the shadows of the opposite shore. Norman remained alone—Norman, who a few minutes before rejoiced in the new life and energy the coffee had

given him—Norman, who now found it ebbing, oozing away, and some strange languorous spell stealing over his senses—Norman, who with keen anxiety and disapprobation had heard the words that sent his gallant comrade upon a perilous—probably a useless—errand, yet who found himself powerless to remonstrate or to act. Malloy had vanished. Holt was utterly alone—alone with the strange stupor that dulled the flow of the life-blood in his veins, numbed his nerves, darkened his sight, deadened his hearing. What did it mean? What could it mean? He rose to his feet in determined effort to shake off the deadly drowsiness fast overcoming him. He stumbled blindly down the dark bank, knelt at the brink and dashed the cool water over head and face, shook himself vehemently, kicked out with one leg, then the other, thrashed with his arms in air—all to no purpose. He remembered he had left his rifle on the grassy slope by the bridge abutment, a dozen feet away now. He must not quit his rifle. He must not quit his post. Yet that post—that bridge seemed slowly turning, revolving about some hidden axis; so were the trees beyond and the black shadows underneath; so was the ground under his feet, and he was growing dizzy and weak, and his knees seemed bending beneath him.

This wouldn't do! This would never do! Back to the abutment! Back to the bridge! Back to that abandoned rifle! The bank was steep and he stumbled, and it seemed to fly up, violently hitting his forehead. It did not sting or hurt. That

was strange. It was hardly felt. All his senses were dying. He must have help! "Connelly! Connelly!" he feebly cried, but the sound seemed stifled, prolonged to a low, long, moaning appeal—an hour between each syllable. Good God! Connelly was away out at the front, and the picket, Brennan and Darcy, away back a hundred yards or more in the woods. He couldn't make them hear, but Malloy—Malloy said he was coming back at once with more of the boys. Thank God! That would save him. That would make it—all right. They would lift him up. He couldn't lift himself. The world was going round and round. His head fell again on the blue-sleeved arm, his senses were reeling. On the bank above voices, low but intense, and hurrying footfalls smote on his dulled ears like the muffled beat of the big bass drum. He strove to say, "Who goes there?" but the tongue refused its office. Then came consciousness that rough hands laid hold, dragged him up the slope, strove to set him on his feet and shook him almost savagely, as the voice of Sergeant Shannon bade him imploringly to say he wasn't asleep. Asleep—asleep on post! Good God, no! Asleep? Never! "Asleep?" he pleaded thickly. "Asleep—you know I wasn't asleep, sergeant. I heard you coming, plainly."

"Find his rifle, some of you," came in cold, sarcastic, merciless tone, from the lips of the officer standing dimly outlined on the bank. "Mr. Scarcliffe, Sergeant Shannon—all of you, in fact—you are witnesses this man has quit his

rifle and was found under the bank—sleeping on post."

And then, far out to the south, somewhere among the trees, there rang a sudden cry. "Help, boys! Help, quick! This way!" Then stunning blows, a stifled groan. Then—silence.

CHAPTER XIV

COURT MARTIAL

A general court martial had been ordered to meet in the city of Nashville. Certain officers were to be brought before it, and when their cases had been disposed of then came the turn of several enlisted men, whose offenses were of so serious a character that they could not be properly tried by a minor military tribunal. It was mid-July when the court assembled. It was mid-August when the findings in the cases of the commissioned victims were decided and signed. The weather had been hot and sultry. The court was tired out and in no judicial mind by the time the first of the soldier cases was reached. Men grow crabbed who have to sit day after day through the hottest hours, buttoned up to the chin in those absurd blue frock-coats, and sashed and belted when nature and common sense both clamor for air and freedom.

It was hard for the court, but it was harder on the prisoners awaiting trial, for they had to swelter in a wooden bake-oven of a guardhouse, tormented day and night by heat, mosquitoes, and anxiety. Innocent or guilty, it made no difference. The privilege of being cleared by the court involved weeks or even months of prelimi-nary durance vile. The presumption of innocence

until declared guilty accorded the civilian carries no comfort to the soldier of Uncle Sam. Bail is something he wots not of. The sovereign citizen who has clubbed his wife, mobbed the sheriff, or robbed a bank, and can induce a friend to go bail for him—and who cannot?—breathes the air of freedom until summoned for trial. The soldier, perhaps falsely accused of some minor neglect, must roast with the felons under guard until his case is called. He has no rights the nation seems bound to respect.

And of such as these, all through the blazing July weather, and into the earlier weeks of the dog-days, was Norman Holt, private, Company "C," —th Ohio infantry volunteers, under charge of one of the gravest crimes known to the military calendar, "sentinel sleeping on post in front of the enemy."

They had sent him to Nashville the second week in July. The colonel had investigated as thoroughly as was possible the case against him, and, with secret reluctance, had been forced to the belief that there was nothing to hope for. The evidence seemed conclusive. He was a member of a picket guard duly mounted. He had been regularly posted as sentry in front of the picket covering the foot-bridge over the stream. He had reported suspicious noises indicating movements of the enemy in his front, and yet, notwithstanding his knowledge of this dangerous condition of things, had quit his rifle and his assigned post and gone down under the bank, and was found lying on the grass, to all appearances sound asleep and unconscious.

The officer of the guard, Lieutenant Malloy, declared that, going to the bridge with a small patrol, he had halted his party in the shadows of the trees, while he crept forward to reconnoitre. He was surprised and troubled to find no sentry at the bridge. There was his rifle, but the man was gone. In a low tone he called, but there was no reply. Alarmed, he brought up his party and bade them search. Private Darcy found the accused several yards away from where the rifle rested against the rail, lying under the bank, or perhaps on the slope of the bank, apparently sound asleep. Lieutenant Scarcliffe, Sergeant Shannon, Privates Brennan, Colt, and Kelly, all of whom were good friends of the accused, were witnesses to the fact, although it could be said that when they reached the spot Holt was sitting up and looking about him in a dazed, bewildered way, and Lieutenant Malloy opined that Darcy had endeavored to rouse him and save him from deserved punishment; but, as it happened, the lieutenant was close at Darcy's heel, and saw Holt's recumbent form before Darcy had time by pinching or shoving to warn him of the officer's presence. Then, such was Malloy's sense of duty, that he felt compelled to make an example of a soldier who could be so reckless of a sacred charge and responsibility. Darcy, to the colonel, would admit neither pinch nor shove, though he "axed him was he sick." Private Brennan begged the colonel to remember that Holt was doing double duty, having taken his, Brennan's, turn before entering upon his own, and Brennan was over-

whelmed with misery at the thought of what the generous effort had cost his tent-mate. Shannon was an unwilling witness. He didn't wish to "go back on" the lieutenant. Shannon had served in the Mexican war, and was believed to be a "regular" without a regular discharge, but the colonel drew from him the admission that the lieutenant was "excited like" when he came back to the picket, and had sent for Lieutenant Scarcliffe and bade Darcy and Brennan, as well as his escort, Shannon, Colt, and Kelly, who had come forward with him from the supports, to follow swiftly. " 'There's something wrong at the bridge,' says he, 'and I can't make out what's wrong with Connelly and Holt.' " They hadn't been at the bridge a minute before they found Holt, or much more than a minute when the corporal's cries were heard. Shannon begged permission to go over with the two men, if the lieutenant wouldn't go, and try to rescue their comrade, but Malloy sternly forbade. It was bad enough to lose one good man, said he. "You'll all be needed. Connelly knew he had no business to cross the creek. He shouldn't have gone!"

Then, soon after four, had come the brisk sharp attack of dismounted cavalry all along the left front. Malloy's pickets were driven in on the reserves, but there came a sturdy stand. The visitors who had been "feeling the line" fell back through the leafy woods, and that was the last of Connelly. No man could say what had been his fate, but one man said, whatever it was, he had brought it on himself, and this statement

came to the ears of Norman Holt, well-nigh overwhelmed with the magnitude of his own new trouble, but, even in his sore estate, mindful of the rights and honor of a friend and comrade. To his sympathetic guards he protested that Connelly had gone in compliance with Malloy's express instructions, if not positive orders, and some of the men found means to tell this to their furious old captain—who was almost delirious with mingled fever of his own and fear for Norman's sake—and Gaffney told such officers as came to see him, and they told the colonel, and the colonel sent for Holt and demanded to know what the story meant.

"It means exactly what I said, sir. I heard Mr. Malloy say: 'Then try it, Connelly. It will be a feather in Company "C's" cap,' and it was said in answer to a suggestion of the corporal's that he could steal across and hear what was going on."

But against an officer's denial what avails the story of an accused and desperate man—a man who, barely ten minutes after the departure of Connelly, was found away from his assigned post, his arms, his duty, and sleeping stupidly under the bank? To his colonel Holt had declared he was not asleep, but fighting desperately against it. He declared that he had been overcome by some strange, powerful stupor. He never before had had such a seizure. He could almost believe he had been drugged, yet he had had nothing to eat or drink except the hardtack and coffee shared liberally by a dozen men, not one of

whom had experienced any such sensation. The story did not help Norman. It seemed as though he were past help. Ten days he was held under guard at the front, then sent by order to Nashville, where he seemed to have not a friend in the garrison until there came a day that brought Bob Enyart, captain and assistant inspector-general, back from the front, where, as luck would have it, he had met poor, bewildered old Gaffney, heard his story, then that of the colonel, whom he knew by reputation only, and the first thing he did on reaching Nashville was to ask where Holt was to be found, and then to go and find him.

Eleven strong sat the court on the momentous morning when the case of Norman Holt was called, authorized to proceed with the business before them, even though reduced below the original thirteen. Eleven red-faced, red-sashed, blue-coated men, and one pallid, nerve-racked captain in a flannel sack, the judge-advocate of the court, assembled for duty, and the latter looked dubiously on the prisoner as he quietly took his seat and a calm survey of his judges. In the exercise of his prerogative as legal adviser of the accused, as well as his prosecutor, and with laudable intent to expedite the action of the court, Captain Purdy had talked seriously for an hour with the young Kentuckian, had urged him to plead guilty, make a statement setting forth the exhausting nature of the duties he had been called upon to perform for several days prior to his offense; to call on his captain, or anybody

else he could think of, for testimony as to character, and then throw himself on the mercy of the court. "It's the best you can do," said he. "The evidence of the officers of the guard, Sergeant Shannon, and others is bound to convict you, and a court is always more apt to be hard on fellows who sulk than those who come out like men and frankly admit their guilt." And, to his manifest disappointment, if not chagrin, the accused had very respectfully, but positively, declined.

"I was not asleep," said he. "I was conscious of what was going on around me. I was on the verge of a swoon, perhaps, but I am not guilty of the charge and I will not plead guilty."

Purdy had communicated the decision of the accused to the court, and that august body shrugged its shoulders, while the president, a colonel of volunteers, with long service in the regulars, ominously said, "All right," but was manifestly disturbed, on looking up from the newspaper he had been reading, to see among the gathering spectators Captain Bob Enyart of the headquarters staff, a West Pointer and a man of mark and influence. "What's he doing here?" asked the president of Purdy.

"Says he's interested in this case of Holt's," answered the judge-advocate. "*Arcades ambo*, I suppose, which means both Blue Grassers—Kentucky cousins."

The colonel frowned. It never pleases a court to feel that it is under supervision. Headquarters might have to pass upon its finding and sentence.

If so, it was obviously indelicate in headquarters to have its representative present during the trial itself. Several other officers had entered and taken seats, but of them the president took no account. A dozen soldiers were grouped on the opposite side of the long, bare room. The guard yawned in the corridor without. The witnesses waited and wilted in an adjoining room—save Malloy, who, with nervous step paced up and down the hall. It is a grewsome thing to swear away a man's life, but had he not practically so sworn already? Could he now recede from his original reports and statements? Would he if he could? The judge-advocate had purposely sent his witnesses for the prosecution out of the prisoner's sight as silently, passively, sadly, Norman climbed the stairs from the hot sunshine of the outer street. The only hope, help, or consolation that had come to him since they sent him back from camp, and out of range of sympathetic Emmets, was brought to him by Enyart's brief visit, and his soul had been faint and weary within him. But Enyart's vehement, urgent words had sounded the call to battle again. The spirit of fight still lived. He could not die without brave defense of his own good name and bitter blows at them who would destroy it.

"You still adhere to your decision?" asked Purdy, as he signaled Holt to draw his chair closer to the table. A grave bow was the only answer, and with a nod to the president, the judge-advocate arose, and in perfunctory fashion rapidly read off the order convening the court; and with-

out the faintest alteration of tone or manner, but as though the formula were printed at the bottom of the page, turned on the prisoner with the stereotyped query, "You have heard the order convening the court. Do you object to being tried by any member named therein? You do not, and the court will now be sworn."

There was a rasp and rattle of chairs, a clatter of swords, a laying aside, temporarily, at least, of newspapers, a slow finding of their feet on part of eleven overclad, superheated men, an uplifting of bared right hands, and then in the same dreary monotone the judge-advocate reeled off the words of the same old oath binding "you and each of you to well and truly try and determine the matter now before you between the United States of America and the prisoner to be tried, and to duly administer justice according to the provisions of an act establishing rules and articles for the government of the armies of the United States without partiality, favor, or affection, and if any doubt should arise not explained by said articles, then according to your conscience, the best of your understanding and the custom of war in like cases. And you do further swear that you will not disclose the sentence of the court until it shall be published by the proper authority, neither will you disclose or discover the vote or opinion of any particular member of the court martial unless required to give evidence thereof as a witness before a court of justice in a due course of law, so help you God"—and passed the book up the table to the president, who in turn cleared

his throat and swore the judge-advocate to equal secrecy.

Whereupon the court flopped back to its seats and seized palmleaf fans, while Purdy fumbled for a copy of the charges and specifications, read them aloud in the same sing-song manner, winding up with, "How say you to the specification, guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," was the quiet reply.

"And to the charge?"

"Also not guilty."

"Be seated. Call Lieutenant Malloy." And the court looked up and so did the crowd as the first and chief witness for the prosecution, in new, trim-fitting uniform, with spotless gloves and shining sword, entered, saluted, uncovered his shapely head and ungloved and raised his slender white hand as the judge-advocate faced him and, emotionless, monotonous, perfunctory as ever, said: "You swear the evidence you shall give in the case now in hearing shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

At which point the prisoner lifted his head and looked straight into the pale face of his superior officer, the lieutenant lately commanding Company "C," who said, briefly, "I do," and, arranging his sash tassels and coat skirts and avoiding the prisoner's eyes, sank into a chair on the opposite side at the foot of the table; answered in low, controlled voice the usual questions as to his name and rank, his knowledge of the identity of the accused and the nature of the duties which

he had been performing. But before he had fairly begun his narrative of the events leading to the arrest of the accused there came interruption. A cavalry orderly appeared at the door with a note in his hand. At a nod from the presiding officer he clicked into the room, his saber clanking, and handed the note to the colonel, who glanced at the superscription, frowned, pointed to Captain Enyart, seated where he could watch Malloy's face, and motioned the orderly to take the note to him. Enyart received it with surprise, read it with a start, and without a word and only a quick glance at Norman left the room. In three minutes he was back, alert and attentive as ever, and Malloy, who had begun his story with something like confidence, changed color, and spoke lower. It differed in no essential particular from that already referred to, but was long in the telling, as the judge-advocate was compelled, such being the military fashion of the day, laboriously to write out every word. To the entire narrative the prisoner listened with close attention, and with hardly a change in expression, his eyes ever on Malloy's pallid face. When the witness had finished, the judge-advocate pondered a moment, wrote rapidly, and then read a question to bring forth the evidence that the accused had been duly warned and mounted for picket duty and regularly posted as sentry. Malloy was sure as to the first and ignorant as to the second. That was the business of the sergeant or corporal. The judge-advocate, in the same methodical, toilsome way, gradually elicited other points that

were of value—that Malloy had inspected the sentries, had found the accused apparently well and vigilant earlier in the night; that sounds had been heard across the stream, indicating the presence of the enemy in the immediate front; that an attack in considerable force actually took place soon after four o'clock while he was at the rear, escorting the prisoner to the custody of the guard. Previous experiences with the prisoner, he said, had given him grave reasons to doubt his loyalty.

And here came interruption. Captain Enyart, though only a spectator, fairly sprang from his seat, so suddenly did he rise, and members of the court could not but see that he was striving to attract the attention of the accused, who sat motionless and with his dark eyes still fixed upon the face of the witness. Two of the younger members as suddenly glanced at the judge-advocate, who continued calmly writing. Another, a major of cavalry, seeing the excitement in Enyart's manner, and cudgeling his brain for the cause, bethought him of something he had heard or read as to irrelevant matter, and turned to the president.

"Has this accused any counsel—anybody to act as *amicus curiæ*, may I ask?" he queried, impressively.

"How is that, Mr. Judge-Advocate?" demanded the head of the table.

"I have myself advised him to the best of my ability," said Captain Purdy, flushing. "But if any member of the court——"

"Members of the court have been sworn to try, not to counsel," interposed the major severely. "But I object to the introduction of irrelevant matter, despite the judge-advocate's apparent approval." He glanced at Enyart, now slowly settling back into his seat as though all approval and support, and added immediately: "I request that the court be cleared."

Cleared it was of spectators, witnesses, and the person most vitally interested, but, in accordance with the unenlightened practice of the day, the judge-advocate remained. In the star chamber discussion that ensued, the prosecution was allowed to be represented in full force. The defense was—defenseless. Out in the hallway guards, spectators, witnesses, and prisoner waited twenty minutes to hear the result, but Enyart seized the opportunity for a few whispered words with Holt. Something he told him made the young soldier's dark eyes light, his wan face flush with sudden amaze and joy. Narrowly, suspiciously, yet furtively watching them from across the corridor, Lieutenant Malloy felt a chill of foreboding. It was one thing to checkmate the clumsy efforts of a helpless veteran like Gaffney. It might be a very different thing to measure wits with this young regular—independent, influential, fearless—and something told Malloy the time was coming. It spurred him to renewed, to even reckless effort. The door was again thrown open. Court, witnesses, accused, and spectators reappeared as before, and with tones not altogether placid the judge-advocate announced that the

objection of the member had not been sustained —the testimony would be recorded as given. "But," said he, "if the prisoner does not fully understand, as I strove to make him, that he is entitled to counsel, I again repeat it."

And Norman, rising, said respectfully that he preferred to rest his case with the honor of the court, whereat the president was reminded that it was time for luncheon, and so ordered. The court stood adjourned until 1.30 p. m. It was nearer two when proceedings were resumed, however, for the principal witness, Lieutenant Malloy, had to be sent for. The orderly reported that the lieutenant had some kind of stroke. Heat, probably, said the court. The sentry on duty at the hall below said that the lieutenant had come rushing down stairs "lookin' sick" about 1.30, and had gone to the adjoining drug store, where the proprietor informed a presumably sympathetic captain of the staff who followed shortly that the officer had asked for brandy and hurried out at once. Something had occurred to upset Lieutenant Malloy, but the court knew not what. Certain spectators might have thrown light upon the matter had the court inquired. Just before 1.30, as Mr. Malloy reached the top of the stairs, he became suddenly aware of two ladies standing in the corridor and in conversation with the prisoner, the guards making no objection, and Captain Enyart standing by, apparently approving. One was gray-haired and motherly, the other young, tall, with graceful, spirited bearing and a proud, winsome face. Without so much as a

gleam of recognition in her bright, searching eyes, this latter looked squarely into the face of the arriving officer, who took off his cap, bowed, half thought to smile, but stood one instant confounded at the open, obvious, palpable "cut"; then, as though in confusion, if not panic, turned and fled back the way he came.

"Miss Ray," said Enyart, "you have demoralized the case for the prosecution."

"God be thanked if I have," was the pious reply.

CHAPTER XV

THE DEATH SENTENCE

A gleam of light in the midst of his darkness of despond had come to Norman Holt at last, but it was all too brief. Two days only did he see Kate Ray and her gentle mother. One long talk only, and that in the presence of the officer of the guard, was he permitted with these old and dear friends. Even though by this time it was known that the Rays of Lexington had held fast to the cause of the Union, there were stories afloat, and stories believed, that the heart of the proud Kentucky girl was pledged to a gallant soldier in the Southern army, and that there was frequent correspondence maintained, who could say how? Everybody seemed to know that Henry Holt had been her devoted admirer. Everybody seemed to take it for granted that the affair was settled—everybody, that is, except a possible few with hopes of their own. Everybody seemed to have heard that since his escape from the guards, his rescue by Morgan's cavalry, Henry Holt had been seen at the old homestead, and, furthermore, had been "looked for" about Lexington. There were not lacking stern-hearted generals in the Union army to hold that the Rays knew too much of our force, and the disposition

thereof, and who objected to their being allowed to wander at will within our lines. The statement that they had come to Nashville solely to cheer and comfort Norman Holt only strengthened the belief in Kate's engagement to his elder brother, and augmented the vague feeling, that had so unaccountably lingered, that Norman Holt, at heart, at least, was disloyal.

Just one long talk had been permitted them, a talk in which she told him that she had indeed written a long letter, mainly about home matters, but incidentally much that she believed about Daisy Lane and more about Mr. Malloy. It was her belief that the parents were striving to induce Daisy to accept that young man, and that Daisy was valiantly standing out against them. It was her belief that the Malloys, father and son, were obtaining the same influence over Mr. Lane that the Senator had exercised over Judge McIntyre, and she deplored it more than she could tell. Had Norman no suspicion as to the fate of her letter? Norman had; but no proof, whatsoever. The man to whom it had been intrusted had long since been sent to hospital with fever, and was now a deserter from the army and could not be found. She told him of Belleview—that it was still safe, still cared for by the overseer and his family, and surrounded by many of the old colony of blacks, though how they lived, and apparently throve, was a mystery. The doctor had at last accounts been visiting his sister, but he remained with her only a few days. Henry (and here, though Kate's clear eyes fell not, and

she looked Norman full in the face, the color deepened in her cheeks at the mention of the name)—Henry was well and on duty with General Bragg and counted on seeing Kentucky again in the near future, a very significant piece of information, perhaps, for a loyal girl to possess, yet it was the open boast, as it was the lively hope, of the whole South that the battle flags would be flaunting along the Ohio before the world was much more than a month older. And Kate declared to Norman among other things that she knew Henry in no way accused him save for having sided with the North, as he expressed it, against the South. It was a favorite sophistry to ignore the Union in the matter, and to hold that it was only section against section, not the Union struggling for life. But when Norman asked the question, "How about father?" she faltered. She could not reply, because she knew the fiery old physician had heard it all, had heard of Henry's capture by Sheridan's troopers, guided, brother against brother, by the younger son, and that the father's wrath was beyond description. Trust a woman to divert a man from a perilous topic! She had saved the next bit for just such an emergency.

"Only four days ago, Norman, I saw Daisy," said she. "I spent nearly two hours with her at the old house in Fourth Street. But Mrs. Lane never left us." Norman had glanced up quickly at the first announcement. His eyes again fell at the last. He knew what she would say. There had been no opportunity for confidences. The

Lanes had heard with real sorrow, said she, of this new trouble that had come upon him, but were confident, at least Mrs. Lane so expressed herself, that he would come through "with flying colors." Daisy, speaking of color, had little or none. Daisy looked white and wan. Her mother said it was the heat. They had been accustomed to go to the country for the summer, but this year they felt they could not leave Cincinnati. Mr. Lane was on duty in front of Washington with McDowell's Corps, and they were very anxious, for "Stonewall" Jackson was nearing the Rapidan. McClellan was hurrying out of the Peninsula. The army didn't like or trust the new General from the West, and things were at sixes and sevens. Mr. Lane wrote that he was fearful that big battles would be fought around Washington, and that the South would make a dash on Cincinnati. "Mrs. Lane talked all the time," said Kate. It was Mr. Lane said this, or Mr. Lane wrote that, and Mr. Lane thought all manner of things, and it was evident to the clear-sighted girl that Mrs. Lane was nervous, anxious, and ill at ease; that her incessant chatter was to prevent questioning of either Daisy or herself; and so, although Kate had stayed and lunched with them, she came away with as little knowledge of their real sentiments toward Norman as when she entered the house. Neither had she opportunity to refer to Mr. Malloy, and to what she considered his persecution of Norman.

But there had been one significant episode to which she made no allusion whatever. She did

not wish Norman to know that, as she left the house, followed to the door wistfully by Daisy, volubly by her mother, there on the steps, as though just about to enter, stood a portly, prosperous looking, somewhat overdressed man of fifty years or more, whom Mrs. Lane at once addressed as "Senator," and whom Miss Ray knew at once as the senior Malloy. As she glanced back over her shoulder she saw one piteous look in Daisy's white face and it haunted her all the way to Nashville. Thither had they journeyed under escort of Major Marshall, a near neighbor and old friend. There they had communicated at once with Enyart, and presented their letter to the commanding General, who received it and them dubiously, and within forty-eight hours of their arrival Enyart received orders to the front, Marshall to the rear, and the ladies were politely told that Major Marshall would escort them back to Louisville, where ruled a new General commanding the department, a patriot who knew not Kentuckians and feared them, even gift-bearing and professing loyalty. Kate Ray was wrathful, indeed, rebellious, but her gentle mother curbed the rising indignation and ready tongue. It was "Bob" Enyart who most felt and could least resent the General's act.

"Be of good cheer, Holt, my boy," he had said to the prisoner, as he shook his hand. "Even if they have to find in accordance with that one-sided evidence, they'll be sure to recommend, and when the case comes up for review you'll be all right."

"Be of good cheer, Norman," murmured Kate, with brimming eyes, as she clasped both his hands in hers. "Somebody's been at work telling tales at our expense, as they have at yours, but once back in Kentucky we can watch over your interests, and we will."

Be of good cheer, indeed! One or two junior members of the court, in the course of the long, long trial that followed, strove to cross-question and to extract evidence that might tend to shake the strong testimony accumulating hour by hour against him, but, just as before, when Captain Wing could have cleared him of the charge of treachery at Belleview, so, now, the one man whose evidence might save him was either dead or a prisoner in the enemy's lines. Neither Wing nor Corporal Connelly had yet been heard from. In those days the accused could not take the witness stand in his own behalf. He could only make a statement. In those days the judge-advocate was not excluded, as now, from the deliberations of the court upon the evidence. He was there to argue and plead, if need be, the case against the prisoner, and did it. On the last day of the trial Norman Holt had read with choking voice his brief, soldierly, but solemn appeal. He reiterated, what Malloy had denied under oath, that the one witness who could have aided him had been practically ordered by Malloy to cross the bridge—to creep within earshot of the enemy. He declared that he believed now that it was all part of a deliberately arranged plan to ruin him. He believed the coffee given him had been drugged.

He had no evidence of any kind to offer, unless they could summon his old captain as to character, or that new young brigadier-general, Sheridan, who had urged his being commissioned. The judge-advocate said he was ready to admit that the captain could testify to his having been a soldier without a flaw. So might Sheridan, though he had only seen him once. These were, after all, matters of individual opinion and had nothing to do with the case. The question before the court was whether or not Holt had gone to sleep on his post in the immediate front of the enemy, and when the court was cleared and closed for deliberation the prosecution remained to argue; the defense went back to jail.

And three weeks later, with a stroke of his pen, the General commanding the department—Grant and Buell being farther to the south watching the mysterious moves of Beauregard and Bragg—approved the findings and confirmed the sentence of the court, "two-thirds of the members thereof concurring," that Private Norman Holt, Company "C,"—th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, guilty of the crime of sleeping on post, be shot to death by musketry.

There was a strange, solemn scene, when, in the presence of his guard and certain of the prisoners, the order promulgating that sentence was read. The young officer on whom devolved the painful duty had marched with him many a day, shoulder to shoulder, in the battalion of cadets, and, though not in the same class, had known him well, and so was not surprised at the calm, reso-

lute bearing of the almost friendless soldier. Holt well knew what to expect. Before the order was in print the rumor was on the streets and flying from camp to camp.

"The—the date will be announced in a day or two," said the aide-de-camp, in a voice that grew husky and almost inaudible. Something in Norman's pale, sad face moved him in spite of official effort. "The General has directed me to ask if you have any—any wishes to express."

"Yes," said Norman, promptly, firmly. "Yes, one. I ask that the officer who swore my life away may be required to complete his work—that Lieutenant Malloy be ordered to command the firing party."

CHAPTER XVI

SHOT—WITH THE HONORS OF WAR

September, and all the North was in wild alarm! Lee, outfighting Pope and outstripping McClellan, had leaped the Potomac, and was swinging northward through the heart of Maryland, his flankers riding within hail of Washington. Bragg, dodging Buell, was bursting into Kentucky, where Kirby Smith was already at work, his foremost troopers shaking their fists and flaunting their guidons in the very face of Cincinnati. At the national capital there was amaze and despond. Throughout the Southland was mad exultation. Through Nashville, day after day, poured the divisions of the old Army of the Ohio, hanging on the left flank of the foe, yet never checking his stride. The peril of the Union oppressed every loyal heart. The fate of the old flag hung in the balance. "Let the dead bury their dead," moaned the overweighted President. "Every man must be at the front. I cannot grant a leave." It was in answer to the plea of a convalescent colonel, begging only for two days in which to carry home the body of his beloved wife, who had nursed him and his men through the Chickahominy fever, only to fall at last herself a victim. Those were days in which individual cases could hardly look for presidential

NORMAN HOLT WAS UTTERLY ALONE, IN PRISON CONDEMNED TO BE SHOT.

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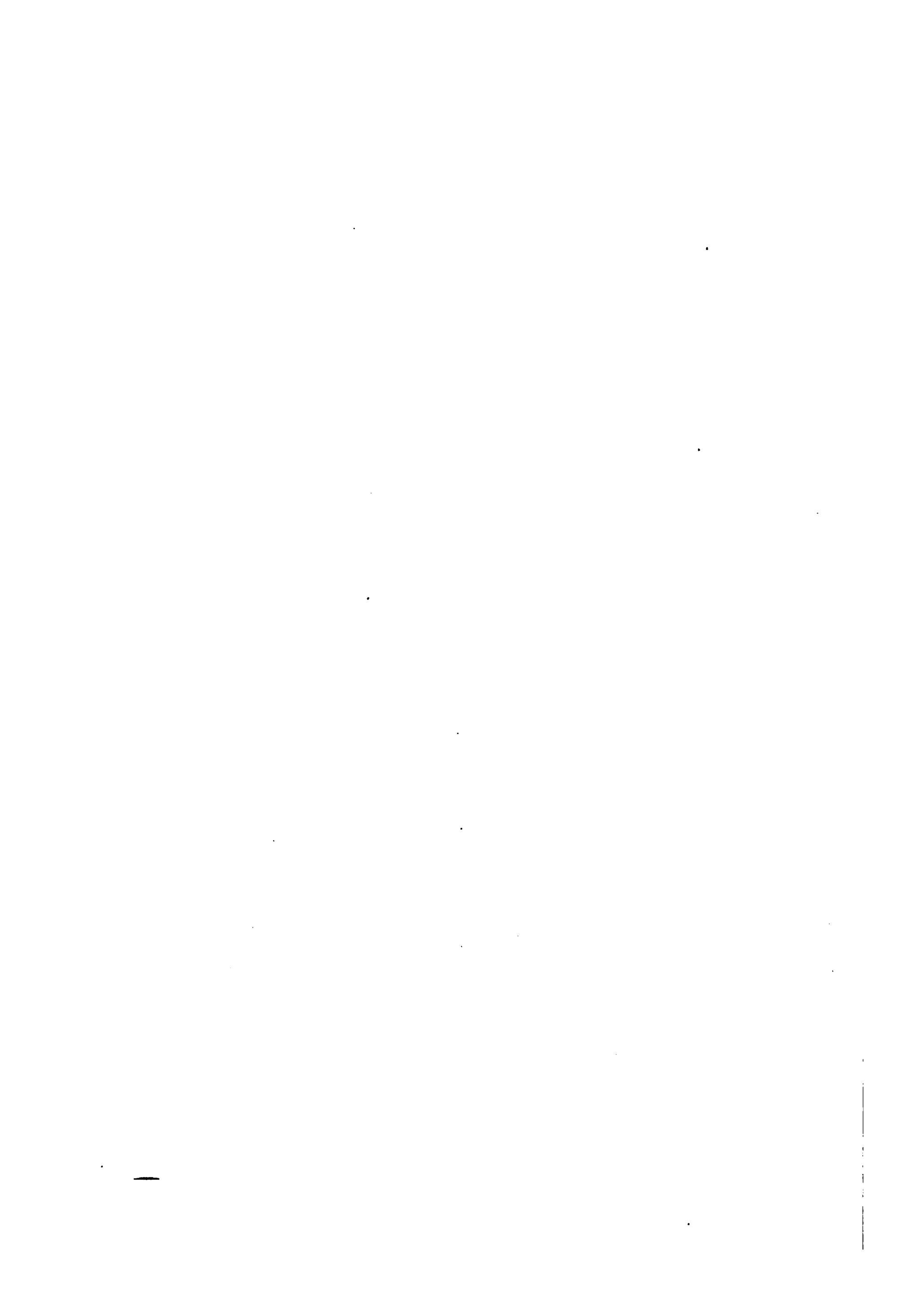

action or interference, for days and nights were given up to public business. In the magnitude of the cares of the commander-in-chief, the peril of the nation, small wonder was it that there seemed little hope of bringing to the presidential ear the lone case of a humble private, over whom the death watch had been set, for whom there would be no week to come unless he signaled "Hold."

Enyart, shot in fierce cavalry encounter near McMinnville, had been borne to hospital. Gaffney, still invalided, had been transferred to a camp for convalescents. Norman Holt was utterly alone. One week—only one week, and the stern soldier at the head of the department had said he must face the firing squad, that the army might learn its fearful lesson, that sleeping on post meant death.

He had written to the Rays, who had taken refuge in Louisville while Lexington was invaded, but until the fourth day no answer reached him. Then it came in the form of a letter from Captain Enyart's mother, saying that Mrs. and Miss Ray had gone to Washington two days before his letter reached the house and, knowing their anxiety on his account, she had opened it and telegraphed. It seems Major Lane, too, was ill of a fever, and his wife and daughter had been sent for. Mrs. Enyart was in deep distress about her son, who, with the other wounded, was being slowly trundled out of Tennessee. But she dreaded lest Forrest or Morgan should swoop down upon the train. All the world looked black to her, but she could find time to write words of

hope and cheer to the lonely and condemned prisoner. Womanlike, she could not believe it possible that so atrocious a sentence could ever be carried out. Long years of peace had dulled our people to the fearful possibilities of war.

Five of the seven days were gone. Nashville was in wild commotion. Bragg's triumphant hosts had crossed the Cumberland, pounced on the Louisville railway, and were heading for that city hard as they could go. Buell had hastened through, leaving Thomas to command a day or two, then bidding him follow. Thomas had turned the situation over to Negley and hurried away with his fine division, and still a great force was left to hold this vitally important state capital, and the eyes of all men were turned northward watching for the first sign of the tremendous struggle that must ensue the moment Bragg could be brought to bay. And in those days there drooped alone, apparently deserted of the world and forgotten, save for his sentence, the young soldier whose loyalty was costing him his life.

The one wish he had expressed savored too much of the melodramatic to find favor with the General in command; yet there was method in it, for Holt had reasoned that, while Malloy might not flinch at false swearing, now that he had either to swear falsely or admit that his report of the affair in the first place was largely untrue, still, he might, probably would, lack the nerve to give the word that should stretch his rival dead at his feet. Holt did not know that only to an

officer of the provost-marshal was such an unwelcome duty assigned, and that under no circumstances would it be saddled on a material witness. Notified that his request could not be granted, he asked that at least Lieutenant Malloy should be required to attend the execution. Even that ordeal might be too much for him, and prompt him at the last moment to confess the truth; but Malloy had been sent with the other witnesses in haste to join their regiment, marching with McCook to the rescue of Louisville. Sheridan, too, they told him, was now at the head of a division. All so near, and yet, under the circumstances, powerless to aid him.

There dawned a day in late September when the clouds hung low upon the sodden earth, for the heavens had mercifully opened and poured out their torrents on the parched and thirsty hillsides, and drowned out the dense clouds of choking dust through which had been tramping steadily northward the long columns, gray or blue, all now one uniform shade of dirty white. The flag hung limp and heavy on Capitol Hill. The furrowed ridges to the south were crowned with low-lying mist. The coal smoke from the steamer funnels along the muddy banks flattened out across the surface of the swollen river. The skies still wept, and all nature seemed in sad accord with the strange, solemn ceremony staged upon the open, undulating fields between the southward stretching pikes. In long blue lines, forming three sides of a hollow square and facing inward, a brigade had taken station and stood

in silence and at rest. Behind them swarmed by hundreds the idlers of the camps, the negroes of the city streets, the curious, the morbid. In the center of the square a freshly turned mound of earth lay along a yawning, narrow rectangle—a new-made grave.

Shrill and wailing, and to the accompaniment of the throb and roll of the mournful muffled drums, the notes of Pleyel's hymn rose and fell on the heavy air, as into the square, with slow, funereal step, came marching a little column. Foremost the field musicians of the provost guard. Then a lieutenant with a dozen infantry, their arms reversed, their eyes downcast. Following came two staff officers in saddle, and then a two-horse team, with a long, open wagon, surrounded by guards with rifles loaded and on the shoulder. Within the wagon, from which all but the driver's seat had been removed, upon a long, rectangular box of unpainted pine, sat a young soldier in the Union blue. The box nearly filled the length of the wagon, and somebody in authority, noticing this, and being possibly a deputy master of ceremonies for the occasion, had told the lone occupant to sit faced to the rear. Obediently, passively he had submitted, and, with dark, mournful eyes, from which all light of earthly hope or fire of soldier protest had fled, he sat looking sadly over the crowded road and over the dripping fields; over the heads of the guards who followed close at the tailboard—guards whose very glances were furtive and ashamed when they glanced at all. In that solemn funeral procession there came

but one more vehicle, a buggy, in which, seated beside the hired driver, was a gray-haired chaplain, whose lips seemed moving constantly, as though in prayer; whose eyes were often uplifted, as though imploring divine intercession; often closed, as though to shut out from sight the unutterable sadness of the young face before him; yet when they opened again were fixed upon it in tenderness and sympathy unspeakable. Six thousand strong, soldiers in rank, spectators in nudging, shouldering, neck-stretching, gaping swarms, the onlookers watched the coming of that mournful little cortège, and never dreamed that that very morning, for over half an hour, that gentle soldier of the cross had earnestly, eloquently, vehemently pleaded with the General at whose order death was to be dealt, despite the recommendation of the court for mercy, and had pleaded all in vain. "Cruel? Yes!" was the final answer. "But unless this army learns that death alone can be the punishment of the sentry who sleeps upon his post, something far more cruel will happen any night. I would not remit it were he my only son."

The head of the column had reached the grave, and there, irresolute, marked time. The provost-marshal, charged with the execution of the sentence, sat in saddle, facing them, but knew not what to do. Every ceremony laid down in the regulations—guard mount, review, or dress parade—these fellows of the Army of the Ohio could be counted on to do without appreciable flaw. Without ceremony, too, they had done to death many

a man along their blazing front, but this ceremonious shooting of a fellow soldier in cold blood was another matter. One colonel, reining about, gave the command "Attention!" to his grave-faced line. The other two followed suit, and military propriety, so far as they were concerned, had been observed. It was the escort itself that seemed uncertain, and the column halted. Then the staff officers and the provost-marshal rode together and compared notes and opinions, but none of the three had ever seen the like before, and the mode of procedure was not prescribed in the tactics. Just one thing the provost-marshal knew, and that was, in case the firing party failed, through nervousness or deliberate design, to kill the condemned man, it would become his duty to finish him with the pistol, and the provost-marshal was wondering what his wife and children and fellow citizens of Chicago would think of him as an amateur Calcraft, and prayed to God the volley might spare him—and not the prisoner.

Then the senior staff officer bade the drums and fifes strike up again and follow him. He led them twenty yards beyond the gaping mouth in the face of the field, filed them to the left, the escort followed, and presently he had them in line again, their backs to the center regiment, the grave in their front, and beyond them, two hundred yards away, the upward slope of the Overton Ridge to stop such bullets as might elude the living target. The wagon, too, reined to one side, the buggy followed, the chaplain, with

brimming eyes, stepped slowly forward and extended a helping hand to the young soldier, who thanked him in a low tone, but vaulted easily over the tailboard and stood erect, unbound, unshackled, and took his place by the chaplain's side. The guard looked unhappily about them, and the provost-marshal, after a whisper with his associates, rode over and said in a low tone: "Get that—that box out, some of you, and bring it over here." It took personal orders from the sergeant to induce three of the guard to lay their rifles aside, and, sliding the long box over the creaking, protesting tailboard, to bear it to the grave, where, after much muttered talk and impatient gesticulation, it was placed close to the edge of and parallel with the cavity, the firing party meanwhile drearily looking on. Then, over at the right of the regiment forming the east side of the square, a bugle sounded and a little cavalcade came riding into view. A General with four or five staff officers and half a dozen orderlies entered the square, but halted as soon as well within, as though unwilling to come closer to the scene. Then the marshal and his friends again took counsel. "I suppose you'll have to read the order," said he to the senior, "and—he ought to be at the coffin, oughtn't he?" he added in a lower tone.

"Yes, and afterward he must be blindfolded," answered the other, thanking God he didn't have to carry out his own suggestion.

"Chaplain, will you and—and the prisoner please step this way?" said the provost-marshal.

"Right here—yes, that's right," for the condemned soldier, calmly removing his cap, had taken the position of attention.

"Don't read—just yet," whispered the major to the assistant adjutant-general, who, sitting very high on his horse, and clearing his throat, was glancing about at the three regimental lines as though wondering if he was expected to make them all hear, and yet sit facing the prisoner. In the cuff of his gauntlet was tucked a copy of the fateful order, and he wanted to get through with his part of the business as quickly as possible. Then he could ride off back of the brigadier —anywhere out of sight or seeing. But the provost had bethought himself of another thing. One of the twelve rifles told off for the execution should be charged with only a blank cartridge, eleven with ball. One man was destined to fire a harmless shot. No man was to know which. Any man might, but for the kick, perhaps, believe that his was the blank, and that, therefore, he had no part in the sad work. But how was this loading to be accomplished without their knowing? This was something the major realized he should have thought of before. Here, silent and somber, in line, stood the firing squad. There, huddled about the wagon, were the guard with their sergeant. An idea occurred to the officer. The rifles could be loaded by the guard while the condemned man was facing the adjutant-general and listening to the long order that presently was to end his earthly career. Then guards and firing party could temporarily exchange. "Go

ahead, Captain," whispered he, "read the order," and, glancing about him at the dull blue ranks of the silent square, the staff officer again cleared his throat and nervously began.

With the first faltering words the clouds that had for a time retained their tears began again slowly, but heavily, to weep. Two or three big drops pattered on the paper already shaking in the officer's hand. Holt, unbound, unfettered still, but bareheaded, stood calmly, sadly, at attention, his dark eyes fixed upon the reader's face. The gray-haired chaplain had stepped forward and placed himself silently by the side of the condemned man. A young officer, the aide-de-camp who had borne the General's message to him, had announced his intention of standing by his comrade of cadet days, but unaccountably he failed to appear. "I don't blame him," thought the chaplain, as he looked upon the solemn preparations. Off to one side, beyond the wagon, the provost-marshal had moved the firing squad, and now they were stacking arms. With pale, awe-stricken faces, the drummer boys stood gazing at the prisoner and listening in bewilderment to the long technicalities of charge and specification as the reader proceeded. Two officers with green sashes under their waist belts had come forward from the east side of the square, saluted the provost-marshal, and joined the group about the wagon, which had been moved a dozen yards back of the grave, so that the entire brigade, drawn up to witness the last ceremony and profit by the same, could to the last man have unob-

structed view. All eyes seemed fastened on the little group in front of that freshly turned heap of earth and the bare pine box beside it—the mounted reader, the two silent listeners. Behind the adjutant-general, a few paces retired, sat in saddle his comrade of the staff. Behind him, fifty yards away, all its mounted officers on the flanks or in the rear of the file closers, stood the center regiment. In the gap between its left flank and the band of the eastward battalion, the brigade commander and his staff and orderlies were grouped, and as one of the latter rode forward and tendered a poncho to his chief, and held his broad-brimmed black hat while the General poked his head through the slit and settled the rubber on his starred shoulders, another horseman, a young staff officer, rode swiftly in from the Franklin pike, and sat in saddle at salute as the brigadier again straightened up.

Not a word was exchanged. Significantly the aide pointed to an official envelope protruding from between the second and fifth buttons of his uniform coat. Significantly the General raised his gauntleted right hand and motioned toward the somber little group out in the center of the square. The firing party once more resumed their arms and stood at the wagon awaiting orders. The surgeon, with long, folded handkerchief in his hand, had stepped up in rear of the prisoner. It was the bandage prepared to blindfold his eyes, shutting out for the last time the blessed light of day. But surgeons both, the provost-marshal, the associate staff officers, the chaplain, whose

arm began to tremble violently, guards, firing party—all, save Norman Holt and the reader, now found themselves staring at a new arrival, the aide-de-camp, who came riding slowly forward and reined in just a little to the left rear of his senior's stirrup.

Solemnly the adjutant-general read the closing words: "The proceedings, findings, and sentence in the foregoing case of Private Norman Holt are approved, and the sentence will be duly executed." Solemnly he read the fateful order requiring that the sentence be carried out in the presence of as many of the garrison as could be spared from their station, and, when he dictated, the General thought to have no less than a full division on the spot. Solemnly the date and time were announced, and the provost-marshal charged with the execution of the order, and with the last words, "By command of Major-General Blank, B. F. Nemo, Assistant Adjutant-general," the reader slowly folded his paper, turned, and bowed to the provost-marshal.

And then rode two yards farther to the front the young aide-de-camp, touched his cap, and handed to his senior the envelope that nestled in the breast of his trim uniform coat. Eagerly it was grasped. Quickly was it torn open. With eyes that lighted with sudden joy and relief unutterable, the soldier read, and then the voice so choked and hoarse the moment before rang out on the misty air like the clarion tone of the stirring call he loved, and over the sodden fields and away to the fog-wreathed ridges to the

south, the thrilling voice proclaimed so that all men might hear and know and thank God with him:—

"And now the commanding General directs me to declare that the prisoner stands pardoned and restored to duty—by order of the President of the United States."

"Oh, may God bless Abraham Lincoln!" went up the cry from the chaplain's lips, as he clasped a reeling, swaying form in his strong and tender arms.

CHAPTER XVII

COMMISSIONED

The long-expected campaign on Kentucky soil had come and gone, much to the detriment of Kentucky and the betterment of nobody. Many a brave life went out in the crash of battle along the Chaplin Hills, and both commanding generals, Bragg and Buell, were the losers by the luckless fight. Bragg, who had been vehemently urged to invade the State and promised that thousands of enthusiastic Kentuckians would flock to his standard, fell back into Tennessee disgusted. Unreasoning hot-heads among his advisers, among them Dr. Holt, had insisted that the sight of the St. Andrew's cross waving through the blue grass country was all that was needed to turn the tide. The invaders brought with them to Frankfort a new Governor and state officers, there to be installed in pomp and ceremony. But the shotted guns of Sill's division answered the roar of their saluting cannon, and shelled the aspirants out of the statehouse before their seats had time to warm. Twenty thousand new rifles were brought by Bragg with which to arm the young Kentuckians, and he was in big luck to be able to take them back, for the Kentuckians failed to come to claim them, barring several stalwart

regiments in Union blue. Brave, brilliant, and admirably supported by his corps and division commanders, the Southern General had been grievously misled by over-confident Kentuckians within his ranks, and in bitterness of spirit he abused the State, declared it not worth fighting for, and found that he had not only left the "dark and bloody ground" more loyal than when he entered it, but had lost in marked degree the confidence and loyalty of many of his gallant men. So far as the South was concerned, the campaign was a failure. So far as Kentucky was concerned, it had cost her dear, for many an old homestead in the track of the battling armies lay in ruins. And so far as the Union arms were concerned, they, too, had suffered through dissensions in high quarters, and no sooner were the Southern legions safely back in Tennessee than the Army of the Ohio, little lamenting either, so stern had been his methods, was taken from the man who made it and given to another. It is one thing to mold and make, to drill and discipline a great command; it is another to lead and fight it, as a long-suffering President and Commander-in-Chief of the land and sea forces of the Union had abundant reason to know. Both East and West, and almost at the same time, the Army of the Potomac and that of the Ohio lost their old leaders and were launched into battle with the new.

Meanwhile there had been opportunity for many a cavalier son of Kentucky to revisit in Confederate gray the home of his youth and love,

and for one brief fortnight Belleview and Asholt, lying well within the broad pathway of Bragg's invasion, and to the east of Buell's racing column, awoke from the lethargy of the year and once more rang with martial voices and soldier revelry. Once more the rejoicing squire, hastening homeward with the army, threw open the doors and welcomed the gallant comrades of his first-born son. With eager enthusiasm the doctor had followed the movements of Bragg's hosts, never for an instant doubting the result; and, rallying about him the old retainers, faithful to him even in his exile, he filled manor and stables with man and beast from each successive division on its northward way, and lavished on officer and soldier, on mount and mule, the best that Belleview afforded. He waited with mad impatience the announcement that Louisville had fallen before the advance guard, and was amazed to hear that Sill had whipped the new Governor, "the only rightful Governor, sir," out of Frankfort, and, worse still, that Bragg was falling back. He listened to the thunder of the guns at Perryville, at first with wild elation, then with harrowing doubt, for when nightfall came the dull booming died away and the roads began to choke with ambulances seeking shelter for wounded officers and men. At midnight there had come to him a line saying that already the trains were moving away southeastward, and it was high time for him to follow. What, Bragg beaten! Kentucky abandoned! Belleview again to be left to the scant mercy of invading Yankee hordes!

"By heaven, it is horrible!" said he. "I will not go! I'll stay and fight! Where is my son, my Henry?" he demanded. "Send him to me instantly! Say his father bids him come and fight for Belleview. Bragg is a coward! Bragg is a traitor! Bragg has betrayed us!" he raged. And the young staff officer who bore from General Polk the brief words of advice besought old Harkless to send at once for Dr. Woodrow—he dreaded an apoplectic seizure—and Woodrow came and sought to soothe and counsel, only adding to the fury of the broken old squire. Not until the night was nearly spent and the cavalry detachment was resaddling on the lawn, was he induced to enter his carriage and be driven eastward. Even then it took stratagem to bring it about. "You must get him away," said Woodrow. "If captured he will be sent to some Northern prison, and that will kill him." The matter was settled by the entry of one of the troopers with a letter, only just written on the kitchen table while the host was raging in the library, but it was dated at Stanford, 7 p.m., and all it said was, "Major Holt seriously wounded. Just brought in. Come to him as soon as possible." It was signed "Polk, surgeon, C. S. A."

Before the dawn the broken-hearted father was jolted away in the old family carriage behind a pair of mules—Belleview's last remaining horses having disappeared when the Holts fled to Nashville; and, once they had him well within the encircling force of Bragg's slowly retreating column, there was no turning back, even when

it was ascertained that Henry had escaped without a scratch, and that "Polk, surgeon," was a myth. Then the doctor would gladly have shot the vile forger, but in his agitation he had left the forgery on the library table, where Harkless found it on the following day, and where, two weeks later, he laid it in the hands of a sorrowing young soldier in Union blue—Norman Holt, returned at last to look upon what was left of the once-beautiful and ever-beloved home.

His father again gone! His brother again wounded, this time seriously! His home dismantled, fences burned, lawn and shrubbery disfigured by reckless hands and trampling hoofs; outbuildings stripped, stables, kennels, and coach-house partially destroyed, while within doors, desolation, if not desecration, reigned everywhere! Woodrow and other old friends had packed up books and pictures, silver, china, and glassware, and, for love of the Holts, and in hopes of better days, stored it all away in loyal lofts and cellars. But the noble old furniture, the carpets and curtains and hangings, had already been sadly defaced, and who could say what might happen next? Sheridan's division, sorely hammered at Perryville, was camping all about it, resting for a day on the slow westward march to Bowling Green, whither Buell directed his columns after escorting Bragg to Cumberland Gap, and Sheridan himself had slept within Belleview's walls, and stationed sentries to see that no harm befell it while his fighters filled the neighboring fields.

And with that snappy young division commander

there rode now as inspector-general on his staff the youthful aide-de-camp who had so befriended Norman Holt in the bitter days of his trial and incarceration at Nashville, who, next to the old chaplain, was the first to wring his hand and welcome him to life, to freedom, to new opportunity. Even in the busy days of the pursuit and the recuperation after Perryville, Sheridan had found time to listen to Captain Ransom's vivid account of that dramatic scene and of the trial and tribulations that preceded it, and now the little General's sympathies were fully aroused, and his efforts in Norman's behalf were redoubled. An order had earlier been obtained granting the young soldier a month's furlough, for by this time his history, his high connections, and his sufferings were matters that were the talk of half the army. The Enyarts had opened their hospitable doors to him at Louisville, despite the fact that already they had three wounded officers beneath their roof. Captain Bob, recovering slowly, had eagerly questioned their soldier guest as to any knowledge he might have concerning the influence brought to bear upon the President. On this point Enyart seemed oddly inquisitive. A stern War Secretary had declared such sentences must be executed or all discipline fail. East and West such sentences had been carried out, yet here in the case of Norman Holt, where the evidence seemed conclusive, at the last moment the great, the merciful, the sorrowing, suffering, over-weighted head of the nation had interposed and pardoned. Who could have gained his ear?

It was something Norman himself greatly longed to know. The Lanes were again in Cincinnati, so Mrs. Enyart had learned, and there the major and judge-advocate was convalescing. The Rays had returned to Lexington as soon as Bragg's forces fell back, and they heard of Kate Ray nobly, assiduously laboring in the hospitals, nursing our sick and wounded—ours whether blue or gray. Enyart begged his mother to write and urge their coming again to Louisville, and the mother promised, but could she not minister to her only son without another's help? And if that other came, might not the mother's hand, dear as it was, be—no, no, not spurned, but set aside for the sake of another? With unerring eyes she had seen signs and symptoms in her brave boy that told their tale almost before he himself knew what they meant. Kate was a fine girl, a noble girl, she admitted, but Bob was her all, and how many a mother thinks her only son almost too good for almost any woman, when it is apt to be just the other way! Now, if Henry Holt were only left wounded at Lexington or Harrodsburg—or somewhere—how suitable that might be! Bob was for having Norman go to fetch them. They could be so much more comfortable than in Lexington, overcrowded as it must be with sick and wounded. But Norman had been only twenty-four hours within their gates when he set forth again on matters of his own. Reporting at the commanding General's he had received the necessary pass and papers to permit his visiting Belleview, and had gone

forthwith. It was but a sorrowful reminder of the old home in which "young marse" now modestly strove to do the honors to the fiery, restless, mettlesome division commander who had espoused his cause. It was strange, indeed, that he, the younger son, and still a private soldier upon the rolls, should welcome to Belleview, and then, seated in his father's place, become the host of a Union General and his staff. The civilian garb old Harkless had carefully preserved for him needed longer sleeves, yet hung loosely about the thinned flank, for suffering and privation had sorely reduced him. But hope was again kindling his brave young eyes, for the long-withheld opportunity was coming. Sheridan had not appealed in vain.

And then the division went on its westward way, and only stragglers appeared for several days at Belleview. Norman had written at once to the Rays, apprising them of his father's recent movements and of Henry's serious wound, and begged them to ascertain through friends at Harrodsburg whether the latter had been left with other wounded or carried along with Bragg's retreat. Woodrow, accused now of being a Southern sympathizer, with certain of Asholt's citizens, had fled Tennesseeward until the Union troops were once more grouped about Glasgow and along the railway. And so it happened that there was no one to undeceive Norman during the few days he remained at Belleview, packing and storing such property as might still be rescued. The overseer knew not how to treat him. It was

understood among the townsfolk and the neighbors that Norman stood disinherited, yet, with the father and elder brother both away, who could question his authority? Among the darkies, still hovering about the old home, there was universal love for young Marse Norman, and they were eager to do his bidding.

But the month would soon expire. There was still a most important matter to be settled. He had written to Major Lane, most courteously, yet pointedly, asking for an accounting. He felt that there should be money coming to him from the few thousands still left of his mother's modest fortune, but not for a year had Lane remitted a dollar. Now money was needed for Belleview and himself. He much disliked to importune, but it had to be done.

And he had waited ten days for the reply. None came. None had been received at Louisville, and no time was to be lost. Norman decided on returning at once to department headquarters and obtaining permission to go to Cincinnati. That night came a banging at Belleview's door that would have waked sounder sleepers than Norman Holt. In the moonlight without, with panting horses, stood a brace of troopers. Old Harkless shuffled down and admitted the bearer of an official-looking letter, and Norman met him at the stairs.

"This was forwarded to camp from Bowling Green, sir," said the orderly, with a touch of his cap, "and the colonel sent us over with it, as it was marked immediate and important."

The blood flew to Norman's face even before he saw the superscription. That "sir" and the accompanying salute told their story. The packet was addressed to Lieutenant Norman Holt, —th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, care Commanding General Eleventh Division, and it was hard to repress the gasp of delight with which he read it. An officer at last! and, best of all, with a regiment from his own beloved State! Who but Sheridan could have done this? How could he sufficiently thank him? He tore open the packet, and there was the prized commission—a first lieutenant's, too—all duly signed and sealed, and with it were other missives—one from Ransom, whose handwriting he knew at once, and therefore opened it first. "The General bids me send this, with his hearty congratulations, to which I beg leave to add mine," wrote the young captain. "He had a chance to speak to the Governor. McCook backed him up in his big-hearted way, and the thing was done. It's a bully regiment, too, and most of its officers are gentlemen to whom your name is well known. See the mustering officer in Louisville quick as you can, and at the expiration of your thirty days' leave report for duty. You'll find your regiment at or en route for Nashville. Oddly enough, you will be brigaded with your old comrades of the —th Ohio."

In the same brigade with the old regiment, to meet day after day, as equals and associates now, the officers whom he had been wont to greet with such deference and soldierly show of respect!

Above all, to meet Malloy, no longer his superior —to meet him on the same plane! Norman's eyes blazed, his hands clinched at the thought. But, first, he was master at Belleview and standing in his father's stead. "Harkless, see to it that a hot supper is got ready for three at once, and show the orderlies where they can stable their horses. They shall have the best we've got, but the war has played havoc with Belleview."

He was alone when he opened the next letter, a queer-looking affair at best, but filled to the brim with loyal and affectionate greeting. It was from old Gaffney, who had been among the first to get the news and shout aloud in his joy.

"Just wa'nt the boys be proud when I tell them!" wrote he, "and I'm going on the minute I finish this. Sure, wasn't it blessed luck that brought me to Sheridan's headquarters when the mail got in. We'll have you close by us, Norman, my lad, and, bedad, I'll see to it Malloy doesn't get away till you come to pull the nose of him. What d'ye think, Norman, will he try to quit? Oh, that reminds me. You know they sent young Lane back to the company at Louisville, when we went through before Perryville (that we only heard from beyant Harrodsburg—bad scran to it!), and when Malloy would have coddled him and kept him out of their ranks, I set him to drilling again. He was never cut out for a soldier, that boy. He was nothing but a ne'er-do-weel, anyhow. They put him on wagon guard on the march over from Crab Orchard, and, bedad, when he answered to his name at Cove City he wasn't

there at all at all. Brennan, who was took sick and left back at Greenville, said he came in and got $5 off of him after the wagons went through, and now he's dropped as a deserter, with his own father ordered for duty as judge-advocate of the Department of the Cumberland. I'm thinking that boy makes nothing but trouble for everybody."

CHAPTER XVIII

ANOTHER ARREST

November—and the North was neither hopeful nor content. Superior numbers had told at Sharpsburg, after the bloodiest battle of the war, but Lee had been allowed quietly to withdraw to Virginia unopposed, unpursued—McClellan seeming only too glad to get rid of him on any terms. There, in the familiar old fields along the headwaters of the Rappahannock, he faced about, while McClellan halted. The Maryland campaign had cost the South dear, but the invaders went back at their leisure. With Washington and all the Northland urging and egging him on, McClellan sat down on the banks of the Potomac while the Southern army sauntered away. In like manner had Bragg backed out of Kentucky through Cumberland Gap, and faced about in Middle Tennessee. In like manner in Kentucky the South had suffered disappointment and heavy loss. In like manner Washington and the North demanded of Buell that he "do something," but the something the new General-in-Chief projected for him was so obviously absurd that nothing was done, and the heads of the two armies—the Potomac and the Ohio—were knocked off almost at the same time. Burnside took McClellan's place. Rosecrans rode forward, vice Buell de-

posed, and the nation held its breath and looked for great things in December. The great things presently came. Burnside bumped his head against a stone wall on the Rappahannock. Rosecrans was well-nigh swamped the first day at Stone River. Fredericksburg and Murfreesboro' added to the gloom and despond all over the North, as well as to the frightful list of casualties. Those were evil days for Union-loving men. Those were trying times in thousands of homes all over the Northland. And there had been tragedy at one fireside, at least, in the Queen City.

The acceptance of a commission had made it absolutely necessary that Norman Holt should have money, and that without delay. The letter which he found at the Enyarts' on his return to Louisville had given him more anxiety than assurance. At last Mrs. Lane replied for her husband, but there were coldness and constraint in the brief page.

"Mr. Lane would have written before," she wrote, "but he is still too weak from the effects of his long fever to be able to attend to business of any kind, and the doctor enjoins entire rest and freedom from care. He bids me say, however, that just as soon as he is permitted he will have your affairs examined, and render prompt accounting. During Mr. Lane's absence in front of Washington the office has been practically closed, in charge of the janitor, and the gentleman who has been looking after the business, the investments, etc., is at present out of town. It may be a week or ten days before a satisfactory report can be

prepared, but it will be sent to the care of Captain Enyart. Hoping that you have fully recovered your health, and that this cruel war may have in store for you no further ills, a hope in which Mr. Lane earnestly shares, I remain, very sincerely yours," etc., etc.

Not a word about Daisy! Not a suggestion as to his running up to Cincinnati! Not a cordial or genuine line! Enyart saw the perplexity and trouble in his face, and Norman read a portion of the brief missive aloud. "Who is the gentleman who has been looking after investments?" asked Bob, on the instant. "Do you suppose it could be old Malloy? If so, you get a two weeks' extension. You'll need it, anyhow, getting your outfit and so forth; so start for Cincinnati as quick as you can."

And Holt took the advice and the money Enyart pressed upon him, and a few lines from that young captain to the adjutant-general at headquarters, where he briefly told enough of his tale to win permission to go to Cincinnati on urgent personal business, and to delay joining his regiment until the 30th. The chief of staff looked him over keenly, revolving in his mind the several stories that had been told of this new lieutenant who had not yet tried on his uniform. The mail packet left early in the evening, and, crowded though the big boat proved to be, a berth in a little stateroom was to be had, and, leaving there his light luggage, Norman took a seat at a table in the cabin, intending to write to the Rays, who had declined Mrs. Enyart's not too pressing invi-

tation to visit her, and also to Gaffney, to whom he felt grateful beyond expression. But there were dozens of men, loud talk and not a little confusion. There were officers of the staff and supply departments, clerks, civilians, and soldiers. There were many women—mothers, wives, and widows—returning from sojourns near the camps or hospitals, where their soldiers had been serving or suffering. There were contractors and politicians, convalescents and wounded, and in the midst of it all an irruption of provost guardsmen and a stir. From all that Norman could gather the officials had reason to believe that some man or men had succeeded in getting on board without the necessary papers, and every one in the military service was again called upon to show his pass, while others of the guard ransacked and rummaged from stem to stern in search of the suspected.

Writing was impossible for the moment, and Norman found himself curiously watching the work of these martial policemen. There were two officers, three sergeants and a dozen soldiers, all fully armed and equipped, busily occupied in the after cabin. Men had been stationed at each door and gangway to prevent egress or ingress during the examination. Others were opening the staterooms and requiring occupants to come out into the cabin. Norman had his papers in readiness when the captain of the guard accosted him and looked them briefly over, while a sergeant entered the name, rank, and certain other information in a notebook. Presently the captain glanced up

as he refolded the papers. "But you are not in uniform, sir," said he.

"I'm only just commissioned," replied Holt, with something akin to a blush. "Uniform isn't finished."

"Ah, yes," was the answer; "Lieutenant Holt—Norman Holt, —th Kentucky. Mr. Holt, we may have to invoke your aid presently. Your name is on my list as one who could recognize a deserter who has dodged his way from the front; was seen in town yesterday, and is thought to be aboard—one Lane, Company "C," —th Ohio."

What! Theodore! Daisy's brother! Aboard that boat in mad, harebrained effort to escape and reach his home! Norman felt the blood flying to his heart. What new complication might not this portend? Suppose Theodore should be concealed somewhere? Suppose he should appeal for aid, asking for Daisy's sake to be shielded—hidden until the searching party left the boat? Desertion meant death, and he, who so recently had faced the firing party without a hope of rescue, knew what terror it would bring to that weakling, what misery to those who, despite his frailties, loved him—what misery it would bring to her! The mother's letter had made no mention of the wayward, thoughtless, brainless boy. Possibly the news that he was a deserter had not yet reached the family, though bad news travels fast. Heaven forbid it should fall to Norman's lot to have to tell the tidings—to be brought in contact with the case in any way! As a private

soldier he, possibly, might not have been called upon to arrest or even to report the deserter. As a commissioned officer it would be his bounden duty. God forbid that the reckless, wretched lad should cross his path! Nowhere within the limits of the United States would he be safe from arrest; and trial, conviction, and sentence must surely follow. The sudden pallor, the deep concern in Norman's fine young face caught instantly the eye of the captain of the guard.

"You know him, I see. Did you know he was a deserter?" was the quick, sudden question.

"We were in the same company, and his captain wrote me a few days since," was the guarded answer.

"Have you seen him?"

"I have not."

Across the crowded cabin a sergeant and a private soldier stood hammering at a stateroom door. From within a weak voice was uttering querulous protest, and the sergeant, after a brief glance within, came over to them.

"A sick man's in there, captain. He's in his berth, and his hospital attendant's ashore to get some medicine that was forgotten. He's an officer."

"No. 29?—Yes, Major Payne, wounded in cavalry fight, Cumberland Forge," answered the captain, consulting the list handed him a few minutes previous by the steamer's clerk. "En route to Cincinnati. Attendant, Private Maurice Turpin, Company 'B,' —th Ohio, convalescent from general hospital, Louisville. They're all

right. Don't disturb the major, but hurry up the attendant. Boat leaves in ten minutes."

Five minutes, six, seven passed without sign of the attendant. The guard at the gangplank reported that no such man had come aboard since six o'clock, at which hour Major Payne had been carried in by four men on a stretcher. Dr. Wren came down with them and helped to get the major to bed. Three of the men went back to the hospital and one was to go with the major to Cincinnati. He might have gone ashore. They only examined those coming aboard. Sentries posted along the wharfboat declared no man had got on or off the steamer save by the stageplank, the main entrance.

"We'll have to search that room," said the officer, and again No. 29 was invaded. With anxious heart Norman saw the door opened, saw the captain enter, baring his head and uttering apology. In a moment he was out again. "Nobody there except the major, and he says he don't care a damn if the attendant doesn't come—no good anyhow. All he wants is to be let alone," quoth the captain, and Norman breathed freer. The big bell was booming on the hurricane deck. The huge paddle-wheels were slowly churning the muddy waters as the hawsers were being cast off. The provost guard scrambled ashore, and collided with a young soldier, bundle-laden, who created a commotion by declaring he was Major Payne's nurse with Major Payne's bundles, and he mustn't be left behind. A relentless officer demanded his pass, and the soldier jerked his

head over his left shoulder. "He's got 'em," said he, and strove to push ahead.

"It's all right, lieutenant," called the sergeant "Here you—here's yer orders. Shove ahead now." The soldier took the paper in his teeth, both arms being full, and aided by deck hands, pushed across the plank, just "trembling on the rise," forced a way through the crowd on the lower deck, climbed the brass-bound stairs to the brightly-lighted cabin, and bored a passage through the throng until he came to the door of No. 29. There he glanced about him as though to ask some one to aid him by opening the door. His eyes fell on Norman Holt, who was at that moment unfolding and spreading a newspaper. Down went the bundles with sudden crash. Down dove the soldier after them, and, never straightening up or looking back, he thrust open the door, shoved the packages ahead of him over the sill, scrambled into the dimly-lighted state-room and kicked shut the door behind him.

It was early morn when the steamer tied up at the foot of the long, sloping levee at Cincinnati. Early as it was, Norman was awake and dressed, eager to get ashore. The air was crisp and keen, the sun just peering over the eastward hills and glinting on the bayonets of the soldiers at the landing. Even here the provost guard was in evidence. An officer and certain men were aboard before the wheels had fairly ceased revolving, and darted up the stairway without a glance at the tall young man in civilian garb, who, with valise

in hand, was shoved aside in their rapid rush. A bath and breakfast at the Burnet House, a visit to a big tailoring establishment, and by ten o'clock, feeling that his outer man was decently clothed again, though not in the uniform he so impatiently awaited, Norman Holt, with brisk, elastic stride, was swiftly nearing the house he had sought so often with beating heart and faltering feet in days of doubt that preceded the war. Now, virtually exonerated, a commissioned officer in spite of secret and hostile influences, a gentleman by birth and lineage, matured and broadened by the stirring experience of his eighteen months of campaigning, he dared to hope to see the girl he loved; he meant to ask for her no matter who might answer the bell, for he believed from Mrs. Lane's brief letter that she herself rarely left the bedside of her slowly convalescing husband.

As he reached the little bend in the familiar old street and the bay window came into view, Norman was startled to see a number of idlers gathered in front, staring curiously at the entrance, where stood an officer with two armed soldiers. The bayonets of half a dozen more gleamed above the heads of the little throng. Street urchins came running from east and west, and Norman's heart sank within him. What could it mean but that they were there in search of the deserter—that the reckless, witless boy had dared to make his way to the old home, had been tracked and followed? The officer and his immediate companions disappeared be-

fore Norman could reach them. The soldiers at the foot of the steps detained him, but he spoke authoritatively, and announced himself an officer and an old friend of the family. They let him pass, and bounding up the steps he sprang quickly across the hall to the parlor, where voices were heard, and there came upon a scene that haunted him long years after.

Sinking back upon the sofa, livid with dread and dismay, Mrs. Lane was staring with distended eyes into the troubled face of an elderly officer, who must have preceded the little party into the house. Behind him were the lieutenant and the two members of the guard. Clinging to her mother's hand, trying to soothe and comfort, stood Daisy, lovely in her pallor, in her distress and devotion.

"It can't be true, mother dear! It will all be explained. Don't be frightened!"

"Our orders are imperative, Mrs. Lane," said the elder officer. "I regret it infinitely. But your son was recognized, in spite of his disguise. He was followed when he entered here an hour ago. We must search every nook and corner, unless he gives himself up. Those men who went at once to the upper story are detectives——"

And then came the sound of scurry and rush above stairs, then a furious outbreak of useless words. A cry burst from the mother's lips. With a half-stifled sob of "Father! Oh, don't let him hear!" Daisy sprang to the doorway, and there, pale, silent, sorrowing, stood Norman Holt. For an instant the terror, the agony in her lovely

face gave way to swift and sudden joy. "Norman!" he heard her gasp, and with outstretched hands he sprang to her, but as suddenly the gleam of gladness fled from her eyes. As suddenly she recoiled, for down the stairway came two silent men in civilian dress—they of the secret service—and between them a storming, furious, foolish boy railing at them, at the government, at the army, at the war. With a wailing cry, "My boy! my boy! What will they do to you?" the mother rose from the sofa and staggered toward him, when his eyes fell full upon Norman, standing there in helpless sympathy and sorrow.

"Yes," yelled the wretched lad. "I might have known it! Spit on him, Daisy! Curse him, mother! They'd never have got me in God's world if that snake hadn't seen me—and blabbed!"

CHAPTER XIX

A CALL TO BATTLE

December, and the new commander in Kentucky, already dubbed "Old Rosey," had taken up the lines where Buell dropped them, for Bragg had done as Buell predicted and not as Halleck would have had him. On Buell's plans, therefore, and not on Halleck's, the army gathered about Nashville while Bragg threatened from below. There would be stirring times when the opposing forces clashed, and all good men and true were needed at their posts. Brief, indeed, and far from happy was Norman's stay in Cincinnati. The doors of the Lane homestead were closed to him. His first written appeal to Mrs. Lane, assuring her that he had in nowise been the informant in Theodore's case, was returned to the hotel by the hand of State Senator Malloy at an hour when Norman was certain to be out, with a brief, curt note to the effect that Mrs. Lane begged to be spared further communication or intrusion. As the result of the fearful shock Major Lane had suffered a relapse.

"The arrest of a thoughtless, homesick boy," declaimed the Senator, in the resounding lobby of the Burnet, "as a criminal and a deserter is a monstrous revival of old world despotism not to be tolerated in a free country, and a government

that is compelled to resort to such methods can never survive another election, if, indeed, it doesn't bring ruin upon itself during the winter." Evidently the State Senator was already preparing the way for "the-war-is-a-failure" party, and taking his cue from his friend and political file leader, Vallandigham. The Senator said more. He wondered how a free people could tolerate in their midst a contemptible spy and informer, a fellow who, snakelike, could strike the breast that warmed it, and bring to shame and misery a household wherein he had for years received the tenderest, kindest welcome. What did the men of Cincinnati think of a cur who would accept the office of following and finally running down, before the very eyes of a heart-broken mother and sister, an unhappy boy, whose worst crime was homesickness and an overwhelming desire to throw himself once more into that mother's arms before again marching forth to battle? No wonder even Malloy was breathless before he finished!

Norman heard of it speedily enough, went at once to the provost-marshal's office, and obtained his written statement to the effect that in no way whatsoever had that young officer been responsible for the arrest of the deserter, Lane. It was a simple matter. The paymaster had descended upon McCook's men before the march from Crab Orchard to Bowling Green. Money burns in the soldier's pocket. There was little to buy. There was little to do but gamble, and they who were experts at cards won easily the last dollars of

the innocents. Theo Lane could thumb a jack or palm an ace with a dexterity that amazed those who knew what a fool he was in other respects, and that at first baffled his victims. He had won much of the money among the train guard of the brigade before they finally became convinced; then bitter was the wrath against him and fearful the threats. The pathetic home-sickness to which Malloy made reference was nothing less than terror of tar and feathers. Theodore skulked out of the camp between two suns and only in the nick of time; bribed his way to Louisville and to haunts he had discovered while on detached service at department head-quarters. There he lay in hiding until, by the aid of a former soldier pal, named Turpin, whom he knew at the hospital, he saw a way of eluding guards and detectives and getting on to Cincinnati. With many of the wounded officers, granted furlough to recuperate, an attendant was sent, and Turpin, who was of Lane's height, weight, and general description, to wit: eyes blue, hair light, complexion fair, got the detail to go with Major Payne, came ashore ostensibly for forgotten medicines, and swapped clothing and papers with Lane for the consideration of $25 cash in hand. Theodore loaded up with boxes and bundles—some containing civilian clothes to don aboard the boat—and by waiting until the last minute easily succeeded in getting aboard. Turpin loaded up with bottles—or the contents thereof—and late that night fell into the clutches of the provost guard, where he was speedily

recognized. Then came the query, "Who went with Major Payne?"—a telegram to Cincinnati, and early visit of the provost guard at that point to Payne's stateroom (to that stricken warrior's profane disgust) and a demand where was his attendant? "Damn the attendant!" snarled the major. "He's given me already ten times more bother than benefit. I don't know where he is. I wish he was in"—a place far, far from Cincinnati, even in its hottest days—"and you, too!" They found the attendant's uniform and learned that a young civilian leaped from the "guards" to another boat as they squeezed in at the landing. The secret-service men had been on lookout for just such a dodge, and the young fellow in new clothing, who skulked ashore half a block above the Louisville boat, was "shadowed" to the paternal roof, a watch set, the guard sent for, and the deed was done. Theodore Lane was a prisoner in the hands of the military authorities, and poor Daisy was ministering to a semi-hysterical mother, who mingled wild words of lamentation for her boy with equally wild imprecations on the head of his betrayer. As for the major above stairs, he sent first for Senator Malloy, who in turn sent for the doctor.

No. It was no deed of Norman Holt's, but what woman would not have believed, or professed to believe, an only son when in such desperate peril? In his blind, unreasoning rage and terror, Theodore had hurled his accusation just as a wounded beast will snap at the ministering hand. Possibly he thought it might command

the sympathy of his guard, and prompt them to let him go. Possibly he, for the moment at least, really believed it. He had recognized Holt the instant he saw him in the cabin. He had believed, as the night wore on without alarm or annoy, that Holt was really engrossed in the paper, and had not seen him. The major, his charge, querulously took him to task for his long stay, demanded water and quiet, and, hardly daring to stir, the boy had sat in the darkness long hours, trembling. But at last the boat seemed wrapped in slumber. The major, at least, was sound asleep, and, as the dawn came on, Theo noiselessly slipped out of uniform and into the civilian dress, and, as they neared the old familiar landing, let himself into the cabin and out upon the deck. Home he must go! Almost the last dollar of his ill-gotten gains was spent. "Your friends must get you to Canada, with the bank cashiers and the 'copperheads,'" was what his Louisville pals had told him. Unless Norman Holt had "blown" upon him, he believed himself unrecognized, unwatched. The street was deserted, save for a dismal cab, when he tapped at the basement door, and was at last admitted by a frightened domestic. It was to Daisy he first confessed, in part, the situation—that he had run away, after having been refused furlough to visit them at home, after having been most cruelly treated by everybody. She must get him money; he must run on to Canada and safety, until father and Mr. Malloy could "fix things" for him. In bewilderment, Daisy bade him tell his mother every-

thing, and this he was beginning to do, when heavy footfalls and shod musket butts were heard on the steps, and in terror he darted up the stairs, seeking a place to hide. Then came the secret-service men, discovery and arrest.

Norman called at the house and begged to speak with Mrs. Lane or Miss Daisy. Mrs. Lane was ill. Miss Lane begged to be excused. Then he wrote to Mrs. Ray at Lexington, briefly telling of his presence there, of Theodore's sad plight, and of his unjust accusation. This letter he sent by a young officer going thither at once, and in less than thirty-six hours came the answer. Mrs. Ray, and, if possible, Kate, would come to him without delay. He wrote to Daisy an earnest, manly letter, protesting against his being judged unheard, and it came back within six hours, apparently unopened, in an outer envelope addressed in Malloy's portentous fist. Had it come to this, that the politician was not only the business but the domestic dictator of the Lanes?

On Thursday came Mrs. Ray, and, with her, Kate, brave, sympathetic as ever, but looking so worn and tired that Norman was shocked. Together, all three, they went to the Lanes' and were shown into the parlor. Presently a maid came down with the request that Mrs. Ray step upstairs. The same maid shortly reappeared with a little silver tray, a decanter of sherry wine, and some biscuit. It was the old, kindly fashion, but there was nothing further. Kate, often a visitor at the house, followed the maid into the dining-room and asked if Miss Daisy were coming down.

The reply was that she understood Miss Daisy could not leave her father's bedside, he seemed so feeble. Kate came back to Norman with a troubled face. "We saw this illness coming on him in Washington," said she. "He was dreadfully worried over your trial and that atrocious sentence. He was a comparative stranger to Judge Holt, but we had long known him, and went to the Judge at once, and it was he, of course, who took us to the President——"

"It was you who saved me?" interrupted Norman, as he seized her hands, and raised them to his lips. "The time will come when Henry will thank and bless you when he knows all."

A faint flush stole into her pale, serious face, but quickly faded away.

"We went instantly, of course," said she, "but it was Major Lane who telegraphed us to come if we would save you. We couldn't believe the story was true! Mrs. Enyart," and here there were symptoms of another flush, "or rather the captain, had written that you would never be ordered—shot, even if so sentenced. But Major Lane knew the War Secretary and the situation. He got telegraphic news from Nashville and strove hard with Stanton, who refused to listen, and forbade his going to the President. The major took to his bed the day after we got there. Judge Holt took us to the White House. It was a dreadful time, you know. Lee had punished us so at Antietam and got back to Virginia, and Mr. Lincoln looked utterly worn out and broken, but you should have seen his eyes fill as

mother told him your story, and then the quaint, sad smile as he told us one of his. Then the Judge led us away and it was all over. The order was telegraphed direct, and mother sent me to tell Major Lane, lying ill at Willard's, and there were Daisy and Mrs. Lane just arrived, and Daisy clung to me and sobbed with joy, Norman, then ran to tell her father."

"And now will neither see nor hear me," answered Norman. "But—God bless you, Kate—sister!" and again he raised the slim, soft, white hand to his lips and looked into her brimming eyes, and neither of them heard the light step on the stairs; neither saw the slender form that paused at the doorway, then turned and vanished.

A moment later, as Kate arose to send again a message by the maid, the same light step was this time heard in the hallway, and with white, wan face, with but the ghost of a smile, Daisy entered, went straight to Kate's extended arms and kissed her. "Will you come upstairs to mother, just a minute?" said she; then turned, barely glancing at the young soldier who had come so eagerly forward: "Will you be good enough to take charge of this, Mr. Holt?" were the cold words that greeted him, "and to excuse us," then led her companion to the door.

"Wait for me, Norman, won't you?" pleaded Kate, with reproachful glance at Daisy, with eager sympathy for him. "I shall be down in a moment."

Without so much as a flitting glance the girl had handed him an oblong packet. For a mo-

ment he stood gazing dumbly after her, then took it to the light. It was addressed in her hand to Lieutenant N. M. Holt, —th Kentucky Volunteers, Burnet House, and eagerly he tore it open. Within was a little note and a check for three hundred dollars. In wonderment he read:

"My father is too ill to be able to attend to business, and yet, despite our grief and distress and mother's prostration on my brother's account, he insists on attempting to attend to the affairs concerning which you wrote him. Both the doctor and his business partner have objected so strenuously that he is persuaded not to leave his bed, but he bids me assure you that the moment he is able to be about the matter shall have his best attention, and meantime he begs that you will use the enclosed check, which will be duly charged to your account. Under the circumstances a personal interview is impossible, and we are constrained to ask that you excuse us. MARGARET LANSING LANE."

Stunned and hard hit, Norman Holt strode forth into the frosty air and made straight for the hotel. There he found telegrams and packages awaiting him, but, before opening one, he indorsed that offending check to the order of the original signer and placed it, with just six lines, in an envelope addressed to Miss Lane. Then he opened the first of two brown envelopes.

"Stunning sword, sash and belt awaiting you here from Emmets, also uniform. (Signed) "ENYART."

The second must have been "censored," for words were missing. It came by military telegraph from Nashville. It read oddly enough, and had been apparently opened and re-sent from Louisville.

"Business ——, —— lively. Staff appointment awaits you."
It was signed by Sheridan's little inspector-general, Ransom.

With almost feverish eagerness he read them again. Then he bounded down-stairs to the office. He knew well enough what the last one meant. "Battle imminent. Come at once!" And within two hours he had caught the train, leaving only a brief, grateful missive for Kate Ray, to whom he entrusted the note for Margaret, and by the old roundabout Seymour (Indiana) line he was jarring back to Louisville.

CHAPTER XX

THE ROUT OF THE RIGHT WING

January, 1863, and never since the union of states was born did New Year's Day open to heavier hearts among Union-loving men—never sounded the old-time, glad, though conventional, greeting, "Happy New Year!" more like bitter mockery. In the East the Army of the Potomac had been hurled back from the heights of Fredericksburg, leaving by hundreds its dead upon the frozen fields. In the West the old Army of the Ohio—the new Army of the Cumberland—had grappled just the day before the last of the old year with Bragg's veterans at Murfreesboro', and when the last sun of '62 sank to rest behind the cedars of that now historic plain, McCook and Sheridan—they who fought so hard at Perryville two months before—and Johnson and Davis had been rolled up, crushed together, pounded and driven until rallied and finally re-formed under the wing of Thomas, calm, stern, steadfast amid the storm. Gallant Sill had gone down leading his old brigade in daring, yet fruitless, charge. Kirk and Willich, who held the far right, were sacrificed, Kirk dying, Willich a captive. A shell had carried off the head of Garesche, brilliant chief of staff, and something had carried certain generals off their feet, for more than one came clamoring to

resolute "Old Rosey" urging that he abandon the field, fall back to the intrenchments of Nashville and call for re-enforcements. Not he. The new commander was a lion in the fight. The men saw and realized his valor, and took courage from his superb determination. "We'll win or die right here!" was the word, and win it was, for Bragg had reached the limit. Three days later he was in full, though orderly, retreat, leaving hundreds of wounded to the mercy of the enemy, and the Army of the Cumberland moved in and took possession and fell to binding up its wounds and those of more than two thousand crippled Confederates, whose commanders made up in deep sagacity what they might lack in sentiment. It lessened their burden to leave to the North the care of the Southern wounded; besides, the North could do it so much better.

A sad and almost hopeless holiday was that of January 1 for Union lovers North and South—sad as the Christmas just gone by had seemed to those who lingered still at Belleview, recalling the festivities of two years agone and comparing them with the desolation of to-day. But the North had not yet begun to know the staying power of its sons. The South, perhaps, was first to learn it.

There came a period of comparative inaction after the midwinter battle in the mud and rain. Damages had to be repaired, supplies renewed, big gaps filled in the ranks of both armies, but in one division at least there was no lack of incident and excitement. Sheridan's men had much to

talk about, and as for the Buckeyes, from whose muster-rolls the name of Norman Holt had been dropped, to accept promotion on October 31, they, the old regiment, were in a ferment, and Gaffney and the Emmets in their glory.

It all came about in this way: The brigade had been hard hit early in the first day's fight. The line zigzagged through the cedars, Sheridan facing nearly east, Davis, his next-door neighbor to the right, facing south, and Johnson, farther south yet, far out-lapped by the Southern line, facing every which way. Sill, the noble soldier whom the Second Division so well knew and trusted, had had to fall back to the command of a brigade, thanks to the coming of a general whose star had risen a few days earlier. It was good for the brigade, but bad for the rest of the right wing. Swinging clear around them from the south and west and enfilading them to the east, the gray divisions of McCown, Cleburne, and Withers, with Norman Holt's old West Point commandant, Hardee, at their head, bore down on Johnson's scattered brigades soon after sun up, and crushed them out of existence. Then Davis, commanding the next division, with everything gone on his right, found himself engulfed and swept onward with the tide. And so two-thirds of McCook's corps, the right wing, was washed away when Sheridan made his valiant effort to change front and stem the torrent. It is no easy thing to change front forward under heavy fire, but it is a bagatelle compared with a change of front to the rear. In the first case the

men are stimulated by the consciousness of advance, of gaining on the enemy; in the second they are depressed by the appearance of retreat.

Once started, with their backs to the foe, only men of exceptional valor or veterans of a score of battles can be readily halted on a new line and faced about to meet a charging, yelling host. God knows the South could charge and yell, and, charging and yelling both, in overwhelming onset, a leaping, bounding, fire-spitting gray torrent, Hardee's division burst through the clumps of cedar and swarmed on Sheridan. And right in the midst of it all, their plucky colonel wounded and carried from the field, an inaudible, unimpressive major in command, the Buckeyes came floundering through the mud of a shallow ravine and pressing toward the center, where the dripping, drooping colors still waved. Individually they were turning about from time to time, reloading on the move—a nasty thing to do on a wet day with a "long Tom" muzzle-loader and a flimsy paper cartridge—then firing vaguely at the fast-following gray cloud, through which the little red battle-flags were peeping. The left brigade of the stanch division had halted, faced about, and quickly readjusted its line, general and colonels galloping to and fro and shouting caution and encouragement—Sheridan himself, fierce, furious, and brimming over with fight and energy, pointing out the new line, and then the coming foe. But the next brigade and the next, farther out among the misty, dripping cedars, were catching it hot and heavy as they swung round

northward. Far out on the right flank, beyond them, everything seemed gone to pieces, for the exultant yells of the charging "rebs" could be heard between them and the reserves. No soldier, old or new, is happy when outflanked. Small wonder that the outermost regiments came in on the run, and on the flank of the Second Brigade were the Buckeyes. Aids and staff officers, hoarsely shouting, strove to make them understand that here was the place to halt, whirl about, and dress to the left. They had cleared—"unmasked," as the military expression is—the right regiment of the brigade already in its new position, and furiously it opened on the advancing line. Kentucky was sending its compliments straight into the faces of Pat Cleburne's lads from the far South. Now was the time for the Buckeyes to halt and do likewise: but something was sore amiss; either they couldn't or they wouldn't hear, and to the wrath of their brigadier—himself the colonel of a rival regiment—and in spite of the efforts of some new company commanders, and the mingled threats, prayers, and profanity of good old Gaffney, acting major, and to the amaze of Sheridan, just riding thither from the left of his line, the Buckeyes were beginning to break for the belt of timber three hundred yards too far to the rear, and then—who could save the left?

Then, then came the thing that kept the division in talk for a month! Out from the rear of the Kentucky right wing sprang a tall, slender lieutenant, his new uniform dripping wet, his sash, belt, and sword spick-span and gleaming,

STRAIGHT FOR THE SCATTERING RANKS HE HEADED.

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his dark eyes flashing, his cheeks aflame. A word to the major, as he pointed to the disintegrating blue battalion beyond them, a nod from that appreciative fellow-Kentuckian, and the junior had sprung into the vacated saddle, and away sped a startled, astonished, excited steed under the hand of a practiced horseman. Straight for the scattering, stooping, half "rattled" ranks he darted, heading them as a skillful cowboy heads stampeding cattle. In an instant he was among them, his new blade flashing even through the rain, his voice ringing out above the clash and clamor of battle. Vehemently he drove his horse into the very faces of the foremost, and a sudden cheer went up at sight of him, for those on the right were the Emmets themselves, and he in saddle was the lad they loved.

"Halt where you are, men! Halt, instantly! Face about, there! That's right, Scarcliffe, face 'em about! Face about, all of you. Dress to your left now! Who's in command here? Hurrah! Gaffney, old man! Now we've got 'em! Halt that next company! Halt right there, men! Face 'em about, captain. Dress to the left! Dress on C!" Up went another cheer, for the ninth company knew him almost as did the Emmets, and, though men were dropping here and there along the new front, with these two companies steadied and brought to bay, the battalion had a shoulder to lean on. But the lieutenant would take no chances. This was no second day at Shiloh, with a worn-out, disheartened foe in front. Flushed with triumph and gloriously led, the

Southern line came pressing on. It took nerve and force. It demanded every soldierly gift officer or man could muster to stand firm against that superb assault. But, company after company, the Buckeyes pulled up at sound of those commanding tones, at sight of that tall, daring, dashing rider on the foaming horse. Pull up they had to or be ridden down. The major trotted over to him and rode alongside, marveling at the scope and power of that ringing voice, envying the vim and magnetism of the soldier presence, thanking God for it all and the Buckeyes' return to reason. And then, when the last company, far at the extreme flank, had brought up standing and refaced the foe, and the lightning leaped in sudden flash and the thunder rolled from wing to wing, fringing the long front in battle smoke, and proclaiming that "the flag was still there," back along the rear of the rallied line rode the young hero of the day, almost pulled from saddle by Gaffney's grasping, straining hand, cheered like mad by the exulting Emmets, and welcomed by the snapping-eyed, rejoicing, delighted division commander, with the high-pitched tenor he first heard that solemn May day six months before—"By God, Mr. Holt, but that was beautiful!"

And yet the division had to go. Left to itself, there could have been no hope or help for it. But when at last the fateful day was over and the hard-hammered right wing curved round the general headquarters close to the Nashville pike, while Rousseau, Negley, and Van Cleve, under the masterful eye of Thomas, held fast in front of the

Confederate right, men of the three brigades that battled under Sheridan were chatting, despite sore fatigue, over that stirring incident of the day. Of course, as the Buckeyes told it, they had no notion of passing the new line. They simply couldn't see it through the rain and low-hanging smoke, but the moment Lieutenant Holt came along they knew where they "were at," and acted accordingly. But the Kentuckians and certain generals and colonels and a major in temporary command, and old Gaffney, too, knew far better. They were on the verge of a panic, when halted in the nick of time.

And now, with Gaffney acting major, how came it that Scarcliffe, not Malloy, had commanded Company "C," and where was Mr. Malloy? The answer was a laugh. Colonel Pride had sent the adjutant back to the train to bring up certain regimental books and papers that were bound to be needed the last day of the last quarter of the year, and had detailed Malloy to act in his stead. Early in the morning Pride had got a serious wound, so serious he was ordered at once to field hospital, and Malloy conceived it his duty to go with him; nor had he rejoined up to 8 P.M., nor did he rejoin until the colonel had twice told him to do so without further delay—but that, of course, Malloy did not mention.

Now, when men have had to fight as fought the divisions of Sheridan, Davis, and Negley that gloomy day, they take it ill that any able-bodied comrade fail to do his share. There had been a time when Negley's men and Sheridan's stood

almost back to back, so completely were they hemmed in by Hardee's encircling line. It was bitter to have to leave so many gallant dead, so many precious cannon, to swell the triumph of the South. But with horses shot down by battery there were not men enough left to drag artillery by hand through those narrow wood lanes, and at the same time "stand off" the swarming enemy. Sheridan's men had fought superbly, had suffered sorely, and were savage in spirit when the bloody day was done. There was no welcome for Malloy, when at last he found the Emmets. Gallant little Scarcliffe had been shot dead in the grapple at the "Round Forest." Gaffney, despite a bullet-hole through the left hand, was ministering to the needs of a dozen of his beloved "byes," and keening to himself over the loss of some of their best and bravest.

"Where were you all day, young man?" said he, glowering, ward politics—"infloo'nce"—aspirations, all forgotten in the contemplation of the scene about him. "Taking care of the colonel till the surgeon took him, is it? Bedad, that's not what you're here for! You reshume command of this company now, and don't lave it again. The adjutant's back and you're wanted here."

Malloy's excuse carried no weight among the men. They jeered when they heard of it. The major succeeding to the command had no word of greeting for him. Brother officers cold-shouldered him in some cases—some, too, even when it was known he had thoughtfully brought forward

a demijohn of rye, for there were men that night who would have given a month's pay for one good drink.

In the few days that followed—the early days of January,—it was the center and left that took up the burden of the battling, and Bragg beat at them in vain. The right wing rested, and reorganized, and then, when men were well filled again, and had had time to sleep off their fatigue, officers began stròlling about from battalion to battalion, from brigade to brigade, and by dozens they drifted to the campfires of the Kentuckians, and looked up Norman Holt. To think that the man the State had refused to own, to recognize, or commission, should be the man to rally the Buckeyes in the midst of the fight! What would be said to this in Columbus and Cincinnati when finally published, as sooner or later it would be? Every man knew that Sheridan's report extolled the conduct of Lieutenant Norman Holt as something beyond praise. Every man had heard that the dashing little division commander had offered Holt a billet on his staff, and the young officer had thanked him, blushingly, but begged to be permitted to serve with his regiment, where already, officers and men, they swore by him. And this was he whom a court had sentenced and a General ordered shot. By more than one voice, over and over again, was echoed the chaplain's cry: "God bless Abraham Lincoln!"

Some ten days after the battle came orders down through military channels giving the Emmets to know that a general court-martial was

to convene at once for the trial of such prisoners as might properly be brought before it, one of whom was Private Theodore Lane, Company "C," —th Ohio, on the grave charge of desertion.

To summon and transport witnesses from the extreme front to Louisville or even to Nashville was far less troublesome and expensive than to ship the accused straight to the field, where, if found guilty, he could be punished in presence of the army. No doubt there were good soldiers left among the Emmets who would gladly have had it the other way, for the "byes" throughout the Army of the Cumberland were living on half-rations now, the Confederate cavalry, which far outnumbered the Northern horse, being already up to the old tricks of wrecking the old railway that supplied them.

The court would meet in Murfreesboro', on the 12th of January, on which date Captain Gaffney, Sergeants Shannon and Hogan, with several soldiers who were of the guard of the wagon train, were directed to be present. It was an occasion the gallant captain looked forward to with sentiments of lively anticipation. It had leaked out in some way that Lieutenant Malloy was to appear as counsel for the prisoner, that he had volunteered for the purpose, and on being interrogated Mr. Malloy said it was so. Gaffney went wild with Celtic delight. "Can ye get away, meejor?" he demanded excitedly of the temporary commander. "Will ye come over wid me? Shure, wid the brigades so far apart there's been no way for it yet, but Holt, too, must be there!

Malloy's got to meet him, and then ye'll see spa-arks!"

Oh, bitter was Gaffney's disappointment! The trial of Private Lane, announced for the 12th, failed to come off on that date—was unavoidably, indefinitely postponed. The train bearing that valuable young soldier and several other scapegraces drove straight into the welcoming arms of Joe Wheeler's raiding dragoons at the north of Nashville, and guards, prisoners, and supplies were whisked off into Dixie. Gaffney groaned in genuine distress of mind. "I promised Holt he should pull the nose of him," said he, "and the Lord come betune them in the shape of a seecesh raid. Malloy has the luck av a Limerick lawyer!"

But, as Mr. Oakhurst remarked, the one sure thing about luck is it's bound to change.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CUT DIRECT

And many a change did that dread mid-winter battle make in the Army of the Cumberland. To begin with, in recognition of its sufferings and its stalwart fighting, its divisions were expanded into three *corps d'armée*, with the senior Major-General to command in each. Heavy re-enforcements were ordered. Many a new regiment appeared in the old brigades, many a new face in the old regiments, many officers who had won enviable distinction were promoted, and a few, whose distinction had been unenviable, were permitted to resign. But to the amaze, the wrath, of the Buckeyes, their one officer to quit the field unwounded early in the day and to return no more until the bloody work was done, was heralded in two home papers as the hero of the fight—"the gallant adjutant who, bearing his wounded colonel in his arms, hewed his way through swarming foes to a place of safety."

Even the rank absurdity of the statement—the impossibility of the feat described in the great journal (which was more than half owned, as was understood, by Senator Malloy)—did not rob it of certain effect among the masses. It paved the way for the next move. Lieutenant Burnett Malloy was summoned home to assist in the

organization of a new regiment, in which he was appointed major. The first lieutenant of the Emmets was safely out of camp and into town before the Buckeyes got the news. Gaffney's rage bordered on the grotesque. "I'll go to Shurd'n an' protest," said he, and so he did, and others with him, but the little General had vexations of his own, and put the case point-blank. "Protest! What's the use of protesting? The thing's done!" said he. "If Malloy is all you say he was, why the devil didn't you prefer charges against him? Then I could have had him court-martialed. Now Ohio has made him a major."

"And to think," moaned Gaffney, "Holt niver yet pulled the nose av him, as he promised—or as I promised for him, which is the same thing." Yes, Malloy's orders had come by wire. Even "Old Rosey" could not interpose, and all the hard swearing of bluff McCook and a host of other hard-fighting Buckeyes came too late. In war, as in peace, a friend at court is worth a hundred afield.

But away over across the river, in the camp of another brigade, there was less to swear about. The —th Kentucky had lost heavily in the sharp fighting of the first day, the last of '62, but its senior captain took the leaves of the major who had fallen; three lieutenants, the adjutant among them, stepped up to the double bars, and the colonel turned to Norman Holt and tendered him the adjutancy. Gravely, yet gratefully, the young soldier accepted. His whole soul was in his work. Duty, and duty alone, seemed the dominant thought. Men marveled at his ceaseless, restless

energy. There had come a lull in the conduct of the war. Bragg went into winter quarters about Tullahoma. The Army of the Cumberland strove to keep up a bold array on half-rations at the front, and an unimpeded supply line at the rear. This latter they couldn't do. The South had cavalry and knew how to use it. The North as yet had developed no General who had the faintest conception of its proper function, for the men who knew were not the ones in position to say. Rosecrans, however, begged for cavalry, and succeeded finally in getting certain regiments of mounted men which in course of time might merit the name, provided their essays were not too ambitious. For months the Southern troopers made life a burden to the railway guards, and rode almost at will all over Tennessee, raiding sometimes into far Kentucky, planning soon to sweep into Ohio. Meantime the Army of the Cumberland, like that in Flanders, swore and stagnated, but Norman Holt worked like a beaver to the end that his Kentucky guards grew famous throughout the corps, and to the further end that the regiment was presently called in to do duty in the immediate guardianship, as it were, of corps—and later of army—headquarters. It was not what the Kentuckians wanted if there was fighting to be done, but so long as they were loafing about in camp it had many an advantage. It split the regiment into detachments, however, which did not please the colonel, and it kept him and his adjutant close to the throne, which speedily led to strange results.

One day in early April came a letter Norman Holt was longing for—a letter from Kate Ray. It gave him food for thought for many a week, as well as cause for speedy action. She wrote from Cincinnati, whither she had gone at the urgent summons of Mrs. Lane. There had been previous letters—letters brimful of pride and affectionate interest from Lexington. They had heard—and she had taken care that they should know it at Cincinnati—of his splendid service at Stone River. Now she could tell him of matters that, despite all his devotion to soldier duty, weighed heavily on his heart. Though he had written briefly, coldly, proudly to Margaret Lane in answer to her cold and even cruel letter, though he had told her in so many words that she need never dread another visit from him, he could not so summarily shut her out of his thoughts. He could not but long to know the result of Malloy's home-going. Gaffney, the Emmets, and the Buckeyes, generally, had written many a disdainful thing of the new major to the old folks at home, but the major was there, on the spot, and so was the crippled colonel, the latter loaded with hospitality at the hands of the senior Malloy, and whispered promises of the speedy coming of the yellow sash and silver star, provided he would "stand up" for Malloy, Jr. So what could he do? The new regiment was recruited up in the old "Western Reserve." The men were camped or housed, and the major's duties were not so arduous that he could not spend much time in Cincinnati. Presently Colonel Pride was able to

hobble about on crutches and say good words for him in society. Major Lane had gone to Nashville, leaving his business and household to the fostering care of Senator Malloy, and it all looked like plain sailing for the lucky young field officer when Kate Ray was called to Cincinnati by a sorely troubled mother. They had had news of Theodore, brought by an officer—an exchanged prisoner. It gave such relief to the mother, "but Daisy seemed going into a decline."

No wonder Kate's letter was of vivid interest to the Kentucky adjutant.

"Daisy is listless, nervous, fitful, but declares there's nothing the matter. The doctor talks vaguely and seems puzzled. Major Malloy, so Mrs. Lane tells me, has been a frequent visitor, and so hopeful, kind, and considerate. But since my coming he has been very busy at Dayton. The regiment is to be sent forward in a few days. What I do not understand is Senator Malloy's position. I did not tell you, but, when I was here before, he appeared just as I was leaving. Now he is very frequently a caller. Mrs. Lane says she has to confer with him about Mr. Lane's business affairs, but Daisy ought to be spared those conferences. Yet, twice, she has had to go down to see him, and both times looked wretched when she returned. To-morrow I must hasten home. I am needed there. But I so wanted to see Colonel Pride, who has been taking up the cudgels for Major Malloy, and, of course, what the colonel says has great weight against what has been said or written by brother officers, 'envious, possibly, of his success.' Nor did I get here in time to see the officer who brought Theodore's letter. It seems the gentleman had been captured when severely wounded, had given his parole, and was sent through the lines after a month at Chattanooga. He has resigned and gone home, but Mrs. Lane said he spoke of kindnesses shown him by your brother Henry, and as having seen Henry with Captain Wing, who is quite

well of his wound and eager for exchange. It was through Henry that Theodore was able to meet this officer and send a letter to his mother—an appeal for money, mainly—but he writes he knows now that you were in nowise connected with his detection and capture. I can't help thinking he knew then, when he made his furious denunciation. I can't help thinking, too, that Henry had something to do with his putting that in his letter. It is my belief that Henry and your dear, impulsive old father have long since learned through Captain Wing the real truth about that Belleview affair, and that they were as unjust one way as certain of your superiors were in another. They know of your court-martial and pardon. They know so very much more about what is going on in our army than we do of theirs. But, Norman, it is of Daisy I am thinking now. If you were only here! If you could only come a few days! Can't you? I cannot get her to talk, but a woman's intuition is keen, and it seems to me that she is being entangled in a net she is vainly struggling against. Now, if you were here, Norman, I think you could break it. What I dread—I must tell it you—is that they are striving to persuade her to marry Major Malloy before he goes again to the front.

"Now, forgive me one question. I know that Judge McIntyre had invested all that your mother left and that most of it was lost, but wasn't there something for you and Henry that Mr. Lane was caring for? Has there been any accounting? Do you know whether Mr. Malloy has anything to do with it now? Some things have been dropped about him—his influence over the Judge, his recently acquired influence over the Lanes, and I'm at a loss to advise you. But, Norman, if possible—come! Couldn't you write or see Captain Enyart? Even though General Buell is gone, he still has influence and—he is so fond of you. He's—I think—on duty in Nashville. Try! Come!"

Come! What would he not give to come? But how could he ask such favor when Sheridan's division was at the moment under orders for a move and his colonel was stirring the very earth to get

ordered back to the brigade? Come and save her from that marriage—that sacrifice! Even though he had written he would never seek to see her again, he would unsay the word on the instant and hasten to her, were it possible to go. The railway beyond Nashville was again ripped up by Morgan's light-hearted and hard-hitting horsemen. This letter had been ten days coming, probably sent round by boat from Louisville and up the Cumberland to Nashville. It might take him ten days to reach her, another ten to return, and what might not happen in those twenty days? Indeed, were he there would she see him? Thank God for one thing! His father and brother were probably long since shown the light as to his part in the Belleview raid! Now if only Wing could be exchanged and brought back to his own! If only Connelly could be found, the last vestige of reproach would then be swept from his record!

The colonel had gone over to the tents at the General's headquarters. Norman, in his own canvas abode, was reading again Kate's warm-hearted lines, when there came without a sputter of horses' hoofs and the sound of an Irish voice he would know the world over. It was Gaffney shouting for an "orrdherlee" and inquiring for the adjutant at the same moment. One glance showed that the valiant Celt was in a fume of excitement.

"Will ye lukkud dthis, Norman?" quoth he, striding into the tent, his boots thick with mud, his breath with poteen. "Wid Pride an' Sill—God bless his sowl!—an' Shurd'n an' McCook, ivery

wan av 'em backin' me for meejor, they make that omadhoun Foley, over the head of me! It's all along o' Malloy—thim two Malloys—an' me the saynior captain. Will ye come wid me now?"

"Come where?" asked Norman.

"To the Giner'l—to headquarthers—till I strip the skin off him!"

"The General's?"

"The Gineral's? No!" shouted Gaffney, "but Malloy's. Ye didn't know it? He's there! He's back! The regiment's in, an' he's wid it. Will ye come now?"

The question was answered for him. An orderly, one of his own Kentuckians, was at the entrance, with the colonel's compliments and a summons to headquarters. The oddly assorted pair strode away together; Gaffney, grizzled, red-faced, broad, and bulky; Holt, dark-haired, dark-eyed, clean-cut, tall, and slender. There was the usual throng of officers, orderlies, and horses about the group of headquarters' tents, and at the entrance to the commanding General's stood Sheridan, buttoned up to the throat in his hot, double-breasted coat, though it was a steaming day, his short legs thrust thigh-deep into muddy riding boots, his black eyes snapping with impatience.

"You're wanted, Holt," said he, in his quick, bluff way. "I hope you'll go—— Hullo, captain! What's the matter?"

He had caught sight of Gaffney as that irate officer drew back on seeing the division commander, but, thus challenged, came impulsively forward.

"Matther enough, Gineral! They've robbed me, as they did you, and given me leaves to Foley, him that doesn't know—— But I'll not say a wurrd against Foley—on'y 'twas me, not him, the Gin'r'l recommended. 'Twas them two Malloys, an' wan of 'em is here now!"

"Wait here. I want to see you when I come out," broke in the little General impetuously, then whirled about and made his way through a tentful of clerks, aids, and orderlies to an inner office, where sat the commander of the army looking earnestly into the face of Norman Holt, who, side by side with his colonel, stood respectfully before him.

"The line I mean," said the General, with a cordial nod to Sheridan, "is south of Frenchman's Creek and to the left of the pike and railway. You know it well, I've been told."

"I have reason to," answered Holt, the blood quickly mounting to his brows.

"Then—here's the very man you'll need, Sheridan," said the chief. "Go ahead with your preparations, and I'll send Mr. Holt over presently."

A few minutes later, at the General's request, Norman was seated at a little table making a rough pen-and-ink map of the roads, trails, and streams at the very point where the Buckeyes were in camp the morning of his arrest. How strange it seemed that eight months before he had passed through this very town a prisoner, charged with a crime whose punishment was death. And now he sat in the presence of the commander, welcomed, trusted, leaned upon.

He was still at work upon the sketch. The General was busy with his new chief of staff—Buckeyes, both of them—when an aide-de-camp ushered in two officers in spick and span, glistening uniforms—a portly colonel, a trim little major. "Old Rosey" dropped the matter in hand to beam upon the new-comers. "Welcome, colonel; welcome again, Major Malloy. Of course you both know General Garfield." There was a moment of hand-shaking, as the four Ohioans exchanged cordial greeting, and the aid stood quietly by. "You come just in time to go with Sheridan. He was here not five minutes back, but one of my right-hand men will guide you to him. Gentlemen, let me present the adjutant of the —th Kentucky, Lieutenant Holt."

At sound of the name both officers turned with a start. The colonel reddened, looked embarrassed, but awkwardly held out a hand. The major turned sickly white. With a cool but courteous bow to the senior, Norman took the proffered hand, quickly dropped it, then turned and looked straight at the junior—at a pallid, averted face, at which both General and chief of staff were gazing in surprise, and the strange silence was broken by the adjutant's voice as he deliberately drew his hand behind him:

"I ask your pardon, General Rosecrans, but—I know Major Malloy."

CHAPTER XXII

STRANGE FACE AT THE FRONT

When an officer and a gentleman, in the presence and hearing of other officers and gentlemen, especially when they are of such high rank as the commander of an army in the field, refuses his hand and acknowledges a presentation to another officer, supposedly a gentleman, with the significant remark, "I know the man," it means only one thing. He knows him so well that he will have nothing to do with him. Holt did not conduct the new-comers to Sheridan's headquarters. Without another word he returned to his map. The General saw instantly that there was bitter feud between the young men, that even in his presence could not be forgotten. Ignoring it entirely, he chatted a moment with the colonel, until Malloy had partially regained color and composure; then inquired after his father, the Senator; and, Mr. Holt being still busy, turned them over to the aide-de-camp. When they were gone Norman arose, laid the paper before the General and stood, half expectant of rebuke or reprimand, but none came. Like Grant, Rosecrans took no notice of minor affairs when great ones demanded his attention. A few quick questions were all he asked, as to fords and wood roads, and whether light guns could be run through the

forest along the western foothills. Then, briefly bidding Norman hold himself in readiness for important service, and with a hint as to silence, wished him all success and said good-afternoon.

That evening, summoned to the headquarters of the corps commander, Norman Holt found assembled some men already famous in the Army of the Cumberland. Central figure in the group, blunt, outspoken, burly, sat McCook, a map on his knee and objurgation on his lips. He who loved a square fight and asked no favor had been bidden to hold the foe instead of hammering him. The exasperations of Perryville and Stone River still rankled in his heart, and he longed for opportunity to show what his men could do when not overlapped and outnumbered, as had hitherto occurred. He wanted to hit, not clinch, and here were orders that he should maneuver—occupy the attention of Hardee's crack corps, prevent their sending aid to other fellows thirty miles away, whom Thomas would fall upon and crush. Much of the same mind was the fierce little black-eyed division commander, striding up and down the room, listening with obvious impatience to the explanations of the suave Garfield, courteous, plausible, conciliatory, if not entirely convincing. The candles on the rough pine table flared and flickered in the breeze that stirred the cheap curtains and swept through the tawdry Tennessee living-room. It was one of the farmhouses not far from the outskirts of the little town. Two or three staff officers sat copying orders at an adjoining table; another at the hall doorway

was in low-toned conversation with the commander of the cavalry escort, waiting in the mud without. It had begun to rain again. It seemed as though it always rained when the Army of the Cumberland needed to march, and it never rained but it poured. Norman Holt, dismounting and giving the reins to an orderly, entered the narrow hallway and briefly said: "I am ordered to report here to General Sheridan—Lieutenant Holt, adjutant —th Kentucky."

The staff officer returned his salute, looking curiously, almost sharply, at him. The story of that afternoon's episode was already aleak, and men do not trifle with fellows who, even in the presence of the commander, stand to their convictions, as had Norman Holt.

"The General is engaged just now. I'll announce you in a moment. I think I've heard Bob Enyart speak of you, Mr. Holt. My name's Warden. Let me present you to Captain O'Connor. Your old friend Gaffney, by the way, was here not long ago, and General Garfield heard his explosion, too."

Holt smiled gravely. "Sorry I came too late," said he. "Gaffney is sore at being overslaughed, and I don't blame him. But he's too good a soldier to have his chances spoiled by angry talk."

"Well, he charged it all to Malloy, and I fancy General Sheridan wasn't sorry to have Garfield hear that much, anyhow." And the aide-de-camp looked keenly at the Kentuckian, as though in hopes of hearing his views on the subject of Malloy.

But that reply was, at least, not verbal. Holt had been long enough an officer to learn that one of the curses of the camp is the tendency to gossip—the frequency of misquotation. "Say nothing you would not have repeated—especially in garbled form" was a good rule for a staff officer. Norman wondered at the General's aid that did not seem to know it. Meddling in the affairs of other men is bad enough on the line; it is worse in the staff. Warden showed that he felt the tacit rebuke. He looked a bit nettled, but promptly said, "I beg pardon—but of course you realize that Gaffney has been proclaiming this and—other matters—from the housetops."

Then came Sheridan's voice, quick, impatient, and with it Sheridan himself, right at Warden's elbow. "Isn't Holt here yet? It's high time—oh, come right in, Holt. We've been waiting."

"So have I, sir," said the Kentuckian, as he followed his little leader into the office. There, at a nod from McCook, he closed the door behind them, which Warden liked still less. It left him obviously out of the conference.

"Know who that is, I s'pose?" said he, shortly, to the cavalry officer. "That's Holt—who was charged with misguiding Wing's squadron, and later sentenced for sleeping on post."

"Not guilty of either, as I understand it," said the trooper, shortly. "What do you know?"

"H—m, well. Considerable smoke for no fire. Pardoned on account of Judge Holt's influence, as I understand it. Wait till we hear Malloy's story. D'ye think he'll fight?"

"Don't know," was the short reply, "but, if he will, Holt will give him all he wants."

"Oh, I forgot you were a Kentuckian," said Warden, nettled again. "I suppose you know Mr. Holt."

"Never met him before in my life. I'm from Paducah. But you'd better talk to the Buckeyes before you believe Malloy. That's my advice." And the captain quit his chair and sauntered out on the porch, another symptom that Warden was making a mess of it; another reason why Warden should desire to hear anything to strengthen his side, even as against a man who had never wronged him. When the conference broke up that evening and Warden was released from duty, he made his way to the camp of the new-comers and sought out Major Malloy.

But the Generals spoke earnestly together even after they came out from the building. At Sheridan's request Holt had briefly described the situation south of Frenchman's Creek, and again made a little sketch, which, stepping to one side, the seniors compared with the map in the hands of McCook, and lowered their voices as they talked. It was McCook who finally blurted out, impatiently:

"Do you suppose Hardee will be deceived by the sight of a single division? I don't. I've served under him. I know him."

"There are—other ways," answered the chief of staff, placidly, with a warning look at the impetuous speaker, and a quick glance at the three junior officers in the room. "You can leave that to me."

Late that night Norman lay pondering over the events of the day—over Kate's letter, over Gaffney's bibulous excitement, over the dramatic meeting at general headquarters, and Malloy's evident discomfiture. Of one thing he felt assured, yet could not say why—the major had not yet prevailed, Daisy Lane had not surrendered. The regiment must have been sent forward within a day or two of Kate's announcement—probably shipped by river all the way from Cincinnati to Nashville. This was one cause, at least, for rejoicing, and he had another, for even in the intensity of his devotion to his soldier duty, Norman Holt was human. In the hearing and presence of the highest officers of the army he had been able at last to express his contempt for Burnett Malloy.

Gaffney was awaiting his return. The Irishman had heard the story as it reached the Buckeyes, and after a wild hurrah and a rousing drink, had rushed to "tinder his sarvices," for, of course, Malloy must fight. Even in an age when dueling was on its last legs, a soldier could not submit to such ignominious treatment without losing caste in the whole corps. "A missidge," said Gaffney, "should come furrst thing in the marnin'." If it didn't, bedad, he'd "cyarry wan to Malloy," and Norman, knowing that long before Gaffney's inflamed peepers would open on the morrow camp would be left long miles behind, but remembering, nevertheless, that he was enjoined to silence, finally got rid of his importunate friend by promise that the "missidge" and its

bearer should be referred to Gaffney the instant it was received.

"And you promise me you'll go straight to bed, Gaffney, and drink no more to-night. You'll need a clear, cool head in the morning," was the only stipulation, and Gaffney gave his word and went his way.

At four o'clock in the soft summer-like morning there rode away from corps headquarters a squadron of cavalry, led by the Paducah captain, and at his side rode Norman Holt. Five miles out they reached the stations of the southernmost command of the Army of the Cumberland. Between them and the enemy's pickets, who covered the country from beyond Columbia on the west far up to McMinnville on the heights, there was now nothing but the Union sentries and their supports, but in the gray of the dawn were a dozen strong squadrons of cavalry feeding and grooming in the fields to the right and left of the Shelbyville pike, and a staff officer, coming forward, conducted O'Connor and his tall Kentucky comrade to the presence of the General in command. The sun was just glinting the tips of the trees as they came upon the party, sipping coffee at a campfire. Coffee and welcome both were tendered to the new-comers, and then the General, bearded and soldierly, took Norman to one side, and drew from the breast of his uniform coat a paper which Norman recognized at once. It was the map he made for Rosecrans the night before. The other was in the hands of Sheridan. "We mount in twenty minutes," said the General. "What I

wished to ask was, are you so familiar with this neighborhood"—and he struck the sheet with his gauntleted hand—"that you could lead through there back of Wartrace—in the dark?"

Norman hesitated. He had, as he told the General-in-chief, abundant reason to know that region, but there was something in the question, the tone, that brought up instantly the memory of that ride in the dark across the Hardin Hills, through Shelby Gap. The very next words decided him. The very name was enough.

"Bragg's main body is at Shelbyville," said the General, quickly. "Hardee is to his right at Wartrace, covering Tullahoma, and there's nothing but cavalry from there out to McMinnville. I need not go into details, but—the plan is for us to make wide détour to the east, while Sheridan holds them in front of Wartrace, and—others occupy everybody else the whole length of the line. We are to burst through there and try to get a peep at Tullahoma. I estimate that it will take the best of two days and all to-night."

The answer was prompt. "I can guide you along the creek, sir, anywhere to the north of it—nowhere to the south. We were forbidden to cross."

"Yet I'm told many of you fellows did cross."

"Only a few parties scouting for stills, sir, and they had to risk capture at any moment."

At this moment an aid approached and pointed north. Two miles away, over a low ridge, came crawling, snakelike, a long black column, tipped with fire—the morning sunshine slanting on thousands of sloping rifles.

"Sheridan already!" said the General. "Sound to horse! Will you ride with me, Mr. Holt? They'll not need you at the front until by and by."

Five minutes later the whole brigade of cavalry was rapidly saddling, while the General, with a few staff officers, rode swiftly over toward the pike to meet the coming column, Sheridan at its head. There was a brief conference between the two leaders, while all juniors respectfully drew aside. But the little division commander nodded cheerily to Holt, then beckoned him to draw nigh.

"Thomas marched an hour before I did," were the words he was saying, as the adjutant reined closer. "He must be well out on the way to Columbia now. Heard any firing?"

"Not a crack anywhere," was the sturdy answer.

"Well, good-bye, Stanley. Send Mr. Holt to us as soon as you make it, will you? I'll give those fellows in front all they can attend to meanwhile."

Already the cavalry had swung into saddle and were filing away eastward through a cross-country road, but O'Connor's squadron remained awaiting the coming of the commander. The sun was peeping above the tree-tops, and the dripping leaves, still heavy with the rain of the night before, stirring under the rising breeze, shook showers of diamonds on the horsemen winding below. Up from the rear of Sheridan's escort a trooper rode to the General's side, and, touching

his cap, sat in saddle mutely awaiting instructions. His dress, his equipment, his arms, seemed newer than those of his comrades. His face, too, lacked the tan of the warrior veteran. His seat, his salute, even, were not those of the cavalry, and Norman Holt looked at him in odd curiosity. Somewhere he had seen that face before. Somewhere—when it was not pleasant. Sheridan glanced at the new-comer askance.

"Oh, yes, Stanley. This man is to join your escort. You can send him back with Lieutenant Holt after you're—through. Follow the lieutenant, my lad. Good-bye, Holt. Good luck!" And then the little General pricked away, and Stanley, looking queerly, keenly at the latest arrival, motioned Holt to ride on his left hand, reining his horse about, to make way for him.

"What's the game, do you suppose?" he muttered. "You know that's one of those secret-service men, don't you?"

Know? It flashed all at once over Norman Holt. This man in the trooper garb was indeed no private soldier. Swung over one of his shoulders was a waterproof sack such as was often carried by couriers and dispatch bearers in stormy weather. That, and the newness of his outfit, distinguished him from the array of the escort. So did his pale, earnest face, and now Norman knew where first that face appeared before him. It was on that woful day at Cincinnati. This was one of the men who collared the deserter, Theodore Lane.

CHAPTER XXIII

UNDER FALSE ORDERS

Almost without event the long day wore on. At times a squadron was halted, detached from the column and pushed out southward. Especially was this done where road or pathway entered the woods, or where there were broad, open fields. This seemed odd to Norman, and the General saw his perplexity, smiled, and explained: "We wish them to see us. The idea is that we are but a cavalry veil covering a heavy column of infantry on march for the mountains; whereas, there isn't a battalion of infantry east of Carlocks —that town we passed three hours ago."

Holt still looked puzzled. "I couldn't help hearing General Sheridan say the Fourteenth Corps was out toward Columbia by this time, yet——"

"That's it," answered the General. "Pretty much everything is moving out that way. But we're coaxing them to believe everything is coming this way instead. You can hear Sheridan banging at Hardee's outposts now."

True. Borne on the soft breeze blowing from the lowlands far to the west, every now and then the dull boom, boom of distant cannon caught the ear. At times, too, among the woods to the south and eastward, where the hillsides seemed

to grow steeper and steeper, the "ping" of carbine broke the silence, as scouting parties of gray horsemen ventured too near the long skirmish line in blue. As the sun sank farther to the west the sound of cannon became less frequent and the woods woke up with almost incessant barking. Stanley, with his staff and escort, had halted near a decrepit farmhouse in the open, awaiting the report of certain squadron commanders before pushing on toward the heights, and Norman, who had been questioned so closely as to the road and streams toward Tullahoma, wondered that he should be going so far away from the region he was supposed to know. Another thing had surprised him and given him food for earnest thought. Halting at noonday for a bite, the staff had gathered about the General, while field officers came and went, making reports and receiving instructions. Not a word had the Kentuckian exchanged with the acting trooper, who in placid silence had ridden for hours at his heels, but now they came together. Linking his horse with that of a soldier of the escort, the man with the dispatch bag had strolled off to the right. There he took from a pocket a little parcel of oiled silk, and from the dispatch bag some stout, official envelopes. These latter he laid upon a convenient stump while he essayed to unfold the silk. In that moist, humid atmosphere the folds had stuck together and resisted. Engrossed in his occupation, he failed apparently to notice the coming of the Kentuckian until Norman stood at his side. Then his first move was to throw the

unfolded portion of the silk over the address on the topmost of the pile, but that superscription was in large and most legible hand, "Major-General George H. Thomas, Commanding Fourteenth Corps," and, unless he came with blinded eyes, Norman could not help seeing. Why should orders for Thomas be here on the extreme left if Thomas was out on the extreme right? The man saw the look in the officer's eyes, but was silent until Norman spoke.

"You were not in uniform the morning you arrested Theodore Lane," said he.

"Nor were you," was the answer, with a quiet smile. "Our duties are many-sided. Just now I am a courier and you a guide, yet neither has his part to play until nightfall."

All the long afternoon, as the column pushed its way slowly southeastward, Holt had been thinking over his words. Now, as sunset came on, he noted that the courier had ridden out with one of Stanley's aids, and was close to the young officer in command of a platoon, deployed as skirmishers just entering a skirt of woods. Half a mile back they had crossed a broad country road that seemed in better repair than was usual, and the General, with a grin of satisfaction, ordered a squadron sent out northeastward along that road to hold the flank. "But mind you," said he to the captain commanding, "be ready to fall back at dusk. That," he continued, turning to Norman, and pointing southwest, "is the road we take the minute it's dark, but I've got to swing a covering force beyond it."

That covering force must have taken time, and meanwhile the advance along the McMinnville road southeast was checked. It was cavalry against cavalry only, but Johnny Reb was on his native heath, and the farther his patrols and skirmishers were pushed back toward the main body, the thicker they got. "Shove out two of your platoons, O'Connor," said the General, sharply, after listening awhile to the crackle. "They're holding fast just here where I don't want them to. It's time to turn the column toward Tullahoma, but they mustn't see. Hold them off there for half an hour; then they can't see!"

Promptly the captain of the escort threw forward the first troop, he himself riding out with the men. It was a spirited scene, and Norman sat gazing in fascination. In front of them were rugged slopes, up which at a distance wound the McMinnville road. Stumps, stones, and snake-fences adorned the landscape close at hand, but there was a fringe of forest three hundred yards away and, beyond that, bold, tumbling, wooded heights, all aglow with the glare of the setting sun, all alive apparently with Southern skirmishers. The instant he reached the open O'Connor deployed forward at a trot, his Kentucky horsemen scattering fence-rails and squirming among the stumps as jauntily as they would ride to the races. Out at the far front the woods were ringing with the rebel yell, which meant that Johnny was winning. He never yelled when he wasn't—if he knew it. The trouble with our Southern brother too oft-

en was that he wouldn't know when he was whipped. The woods rang with louder clamor when O'Connor's long line got fairly in, and there was a glorious burst of musketry when they reached the retiring line and let loose on their pursuers. Norman, carried away by the thrill of the sound, turned to beg leave to ride out to the front, but Stanley and the staff were gone. There stood the reserves. There, filing to the right, half a mile back, the main column was being switched off Tullahoma way. Then up came an aid at a gallop.

"It's all right," he cried. "The road's covered. O'Connor's people are to fall back here." And Norman galloped on with him, out to the front.

In the thick of the woods and the joy of the fight they found the gentleman from Paducah. "Retire, captain. Withdraw the line. But hold 'em off. I'll show you where to stand!" shouted the aid, and O'Connor, nodding, spurred forward. Aloft the bullets sang and bit through the trees, but the fire was moderate, the aim too high. Johnny was shooting down hill. The trumpets began a lively peal, and presently the rapid fire subsided, and, to the sound of slow, scattered shots, the mounted skirmishers reined about, O'Connor's fellows first to disentangle themselves from the original line, and came trotting back through the trees. The yells that had died away before the fierce fire of the re-enforced line speedily began again as O'Connor's troop disappeared, leaving only a thin and dispersed array to hold the woods. The aid still remained, as though

personally to guide the commander to the new station at the rear, and Norman stayed with him, fascinated. Suddenly, at a point to their right, where there was a little clearing, half a dozen troopers came clattering out in some disorder, as though hard pressed at the front. Instantly the aid and Norman from one side, and a cavalry lieutenant from the other, dashed at them, drove them back into line, and as they floundered about in the soft, squashy soil of the open field, ashamed of their panic, and eager to recover the lost ground, the troopers were astonished to see one of their own number, apparently, dismounted at the edge of the timber, straining at his saddle girth, while his excited horse pranced about and circled round him. It was the courier, and, as though to have free use of his hands, he had slung his carbine. The next instant a chorus of exultant yells burst from the heart of the timber, and a crashing volley sent the bullets whistling about the ears of the onlookers. Down went two horses, kicking and plunging in the mud, bearing their riders with them. Away darted a third, in panic uncontrollable, but to Norman's horror, as the courier sprang into saddle and came spurring away for safety, something, a bullet possibly, had clipped the strap of that dispatch bag, and sliding from the fleeing rider's shoulder, it fell, with its precious, priceless contents, to the ground.

"Good God! Those are orders—orders for Thomas!" shouted Norman. "Come on! They must be saved!" And never waiting to see who

might follow; never heeding shouts or shots or the rush of gray-jacketed troopers through the woods ahead, straight for the abandoned haversack he spurred, noting only as he shot past the fleeing courier that he was clutching at the pommel and swaying in the saddle. Straight as the flight of an arrow he darted on, linked his left hand in a lock of the flowing mane, and never slackening speed, hurled himself from the saddle, his left leg deftly curling about the cantle, swooped low as the gallant horse bore him swiftly on, clutched the strap of the priceless bag in his gauntleted hand, and with a shout of triumph regained his seat, waving the prize on high. And then, then, as in sweeping circle he strove to rein about to rejoin his comrades, whose shouts and shots were ringing over the field, the woods close at hand seemed to spit with sudden fire, the air buzzed with stinging missiles, the crack of carbines smote upon his ear. Something stung his left arm just below the shoulder, and numb, limp, and spouting blood, it fell nerveless by his side. His bounding steed gave two or three frantic plunges, and then went headlong, plowing the soft soil with nose and doubled knees. Norman felt himself hurled forward, clinging still to his prize, and even in his agony strove to hurl it to the few troopers who had followed him. Too late! A swarm of yelling lads in gray came tearing into the field. Rough hands seized the stricken officer and dragged him to his feet. There sounded in his ear a moment a chorus of mingled cheers and yells, a furious sputter of musketry, and

then he realized that from the ambush of the forest a strong force of Southern horse had burst upon the thin skirmish line and swept it all away. Exultant Johnnies were already exploring that precious bag in hopes of something to eat or drink. He and those dispatches were the prize of the enemy. The plans of "Old Rosey" in the hands of Hardee!

A surgeon was ripping up his coat sleeve, while an officer in the garb of a colonel bent over and questioned. No need to ask if it was Stanley's cavalry in front. They knew that well enough. "What force is behind him?" Norman closed his eyes, faint and sick, and would make no answer.

"Hard hit," said the surgeon, in low tone. "Humerus smashed. Bullet just missed the brachial artery." Darkness was coming down. The sound of the fight had swept to the west. The Confederate colonel gave brief orders to the few men who lingered about, then mounted and rode away.

Late that night, the bleeding stanched, his arm in splints and deftly bound, Norman lay in bed in a farmhouse among the Tennessee hills, still faint, weak, chagrined, yet conscious that he had done a soldier's best to save those precious papers. In an adjoining room were gathered half a dozen Confederate officers of rank, and there was high excitement in their talk. Norman could hear the eager words of one speaker. He was urging that they should not wait for morning; that every available man should be sent forward at once to hold the wood roads and check the Fed-

eral advance. Another, older, graver, pointed out that by this time those captured dispatches were in the hands of General Hardee, who would notify General Bragg without delay, and probably have his divisions in march for McMinnville by three o'clock in the morning, if not before. On all hands it was agreed that the capture of those papers was another feather in the cap of Joe Wheeler's cavalry corps. From time to time the surgeon came softly in and bent over him to say an encouraging word. Sorely wounded was the prisoner, and among chivalric men a wounded foe was a sacred charge, and chivalric men were many on both sides. According to the school of surgery in force in the earlier days of the war the patient should already be upon the table, the knife and saw severing the shattered member from the shoulder; but there was no table, and the surgeon was of a younger, more optimistic, line. But he had not scrupled to administer opiates to dull the senses and to deaden pain, and under the soothing influence of the drug Norman lay, half dozing, when there came the sound of new arrivals in the outer room, the clank of swords, and the harsh screech of chairs shoved suddenly backward over uncarpeted floors. Every man seemed to have sprung to his feet in acknowledgment of the coming of a General of rank, and there entered a man at sound of whose voice there swept over the senses of the wounded captive a strange flood of memories. He was again at the Point, a "plebe," and that voice had prompted him day after day upon the drill

ground or parade. Then a yearling corporal, and that voice had hailed him in glad, cordial congratulation. Those were days when the chevrons were found most frequently on the sleeves of lads who hailed from the Southern states, and Alabama, stripping off the gold bars and black of a cadet lieutenant, had handed them to the tall stripling from Kentucky and bidden him wear them in the by and by. Norman would have known the cordial tones the world over, yet lay there silent, as presently there entered a slender, undersized, yet soldierly young man in the full uniform of a Major-General of the Confederate service, his thin face covered by a dark, pointed beard. With him there came another General, older, sharper, and sterner of visage, but soldier all over; then two staff officers, bearing candles and holding respectfully back. The first to enter had in his hand one of the captured dispatches. He was too diminutive of stature to bend over the prostrate Kentuckian, but he spoke in gentle, courteous tone.

"My officers tell me you made a most gallant attempt to rescue that dispatch bag, sir, and I deeply regret to hear you are so severely hurt. I am compelled to go on farther to-night, but General Morgan makes his headquarters here, and we wish to know, sir, if we can do anything to make you more comfortable?"

Norman, closing his eyes, faintly shook his head. It was evident the General did not know him. It was four years since their last meeting—the night the little Southron first called him Nor-

man—the night he, half timidly, had answered "Joe."

"I beg that you will not hesitate to ask," persisted the General. "As soldiers, we cannot but admire soldier daring and devotion, such as you displayed. What we cannot understand is why a courier, with such important orders, should have ventured so far out as to lose both them and his own life. He never spoke after our fellows reached him."

Norman unclosed his eyes—looking up in pain. "Is he killed?" he faintly asked.

"Yes, he was evidently shot as he was trying to gallop away. He died an hour ago."

There was a moment's silence, broken by the sighing of the wind about the rafters of the old farmhouse, and in the leaves among the trees. A crazy, antiquated clock in the main room struck a jangled three on its spiral wire, and a sentry somewhere without sharply challenged: "Who comes there?"

"Staff officer from General Hardee," rang out the answer, followed by the clatter of hoofs and jangling of scabbard, and then the sharp query:

"Where's General Wheeler? I must see him at once!"

"Right here, sir," shouted a voice in answer, and the next instant a tall, distinguished-looking soldier strode into the room, a major of the staff, his dark eyes snapping with excitement. Up went one hand to his forage cap, as with the other he extended a dispatch to the little cavalry commander.

"General Wheeler," he exclaimed, "General Bragg telegraphs to stop the move at once. The whole thing is a fraud. Van Dorn reports the Federal army is in front of Columbia."

"In front of Columbia! These dispatches false! Then how comes it that this gentleman——" And with troubled, wondering eyes the General turned again to the couch—whose occupant appeared to have fainted away.

The new-comer sprang to the bedside, gave one look at the waxen face, and a stifled cry burst from his lips: "Norman! Norman! O my God!"

CHAPTER XXIV

"A LIE, AND YOU KNOW IT"

August, and it seemed as though the Southern cause were lost at last. Lee, idol of the Confederacy, had fought his greatest battle in the heart of Pennsylvania, and been driven back into Virginia. Gettysburg in the east and Vicksburg in the west had restored hope and courage in the North, had dealt amaze and distress throughout —though nothing seemed to daunt the courage of—the South. Then, east and west, both armies, both sections, seemed to hold their breath and wait and watch the midway grapple imminent along the Tennessee. Most brilliantly, most skillfully, had "Old Rosey" outmaneuvered Bragg, who abandoned his strong works at Shelbyville, and the mountain line of the Cumberlands, and reluctantly fell back across the swollen river to make henceforth, as he wrote, their "line of defense the line of Tennessee." But even then he was not permitted to rest, for the strategist of the Union army, the head of the Army of the Cumberland, devised the daring plan of throwing his three corps across two great mountain ranges, split by a wide, unfordable, swollen river, and thus maneuver his antagonist out of Chattanooga as a month before he had from Tullahoma.

And so, while Minty's Horse and Crittenden's swift-footed infantry threatened the enemy at every landing, pass, and ferry above that well-named gateway, and kept Bragg guessing whence the blow would come, the other corps, McCook and Thomas in command, stole from their hiding-places back of the Cumberland range, burst through the mountain roads, and bore down on the Tennessee below the fated city—our snapping-eyed little division leader, Sheridan, in the van. The next thing Bragg knew McCook and Thomas were climbing the mountain passes of northern Georgia, miles behind him, and there was no help for it—he had to abandon Chattanooga and sally forth to meet them. Before the end of August the old flag was floating again over the roofs of their stronghold in the mountains, and all the north-land rung with praise of such magnificent strategy.

But strategy is not convincing. Battles only are decisive. What good was gained by placing an army where it was a matter of such infinite difficulty to supply it, so long as its antagonist remained unshattered in its front? Rosecrans had now to fight a battle far from possibility of help of any kind. Bragg simply retired across another range, drawing our army after him, and Lee detached his strong right arm, Longstreet's fighting corps, to the aid of the brethren waiting impatiently in northern Georgia, and then united, the Southern leaders fell furiously on the Union ranks along the crooked stream, and it was Stone River over again, only infinitely worse. The

corps of McCook and Crittenden crumbled away, bearing even "Old Rosey" with them in full flight to Chattanooga, leaving, as before, the lion-hearted Thomas to stem the tide of triumphant pursuit, and there win the immortal name of the Rock of Chickamauga.

But there had been strange doings in Chattanooga during the week preceding Bragg's enforced evacuation. Thither, late in July, had they borne our wounded Norman. There had been a few days for him of imminent peril, for there were not lacking Southern generals high in rank who believed that he, not the secret service, had brought those "bogus" dispatches to the front, with the deliberate design of falling into Confederate hands, and throwing Bragg and his corps commanders upon a false scent. "It was no better than being a spy," swore one furious leader, who had made a long, tedious, toilsome mountain march in one direction to head off the Federal force that had gone in quite another. It was Van Dorn's cavalry, far out at Columbia, that ascertained just which way Thomas and Crittenden were coming. There rarely was a time from beginning to end of the war when the Southern leaders were not quickly and reliably informed of every movement made by our men. It took less than twenty-four hours to restore the situation, and gradually the cries against the wounded Yankee died away. There was his brother, Major Holt, serving for the time on Hardee's staff, ready to give his knightly word that Norman had well-nigh lost his life in the effort to prevent those

very dispatches from falling into Confederate hands, so that disposed of one peril, but left him another—faced by fever.

It was a sorely stricken fellow they nursed for a fortnight there in the old homestead in the fastnesses of the Cumberland. Henry had to go, because his General had mighty need of every man, but there speedily came from Chattanooga a gray-haired, sad-faced old gentleman who knelt beside the bed of the delirious boy and wept as he listened to his childish babbling. Over and over in feverish dream poor Norman lived again the misery of his father's wrath and disowning, pleading with him not to believe his son guilty of base, unfilial conduct. Over and over again he seemed to live through the horror of that night at Belleview. The death sentence, the execution ceremonies, interrupted only at the last moment, were as nothing in comparison with that. Rude soldiery, uncouth mountaineers, saw the father's grief and dread with pitying, sympathetic eyes, and rejoiced with him when at last the life light seemed to come fluttering back to Norman's face.

Before he was fairly conscious the order came to send him on to Chattanooga. for Crittenden was in the hills. Toward the end of July they bore him through the Sequatchie Valley and across the Tennessee. Before the end of August the Yankee shells were bursting over the devoted town and another move was needed, but this time Norman could travel in saddle. His arm was slung and strapped to the body,—no need to ask him for parole not to escape. But, during

the three weeks in Chattanooga the aged father and the two gallant sons had had long, sad, solemn conferences—yet almost happy hours together—for though enemies still in the sight of the laws of war, there had been perfect understanding, reconciliation, and mutual forgiveness. Each had acted according to his information and conviction. The fire and fury of the father's rage against the North had burned itself out. He saw the ruin that had come upon the land he loved. They must fight now to the bitter end, but there was no longer feud at heart between himself and his "little Benjamin," his big, beloved boy, now grown a man. The stanch old Southerner grieved bitterly that the son had chosen with the Union cause, yet gloried in the rally of the Buckeyes at Stone River—all Norman's doing, as he proudly told himself, and this deed was only one of many. Had not Wheeler's young gallants described the magnificent dash and daring of Norman's attempt to save the abandoned dispatches? Had not prisoners from Sheridan's division dilated on his heroism that bloody day—the last of '62? Had not the father sought, found, and skillfully attended the captive squadron leader, Wing, and learned from him all about the night ride to Belleview—how it was Malloy who gave Norman's name as guide to the commanding officer—how Norman had pleaded for relief when the Gap was fairly passed, even when he believed Belleview to be unoccupied by any of his kith and kin? Through Wing the father had gone further still, found other soldiers whose fate was intri-

cately connected with that of his beloved, his misguided, boy.

It was a great day when, away back at Rome, he found and questioned Connelly, still feeble from his injuries and from prison fever, but clear-headed and emphatic. It was a strange day when, late in August, in the streets of Chattanooga, as they took the road for Rossville Gap *en route* to Dalton, Norman and his father came face to face with Theodore Lane, dressed in Confederate uniform. Unable to bear the privation of prison life with its squalor and semi-starvation, the weakling had offered his services on any terms, had declared himself a voluntary deserter from the army of the Union, and they put him on duty in the dispensary of the hospital, where, so long as their scant supply of wines and liquor was kept under lock and key, he could do no great harm. There was a scene at which guards, teamsters, drivers and frowsy darkies gazed open-mouthed when the gray-haired old doctor sprang from his vehicle and begged for a horsewhip with which to chastise that lying, low-lived, two-faced cur. It was Norman who dragged his father back and sought to pacify him, while Theodore miserably shook and almost wept. They left the wretched lad whining in the streets, and when the doctor had sufficiently cooled down, entered the hospital where still lingered certain helpless wounded, too badly crippled to be worth anything to either side, and therefore left by the astute leader of the Southern host to be cared for by the North; and here, for the first time since

the dawn of that black morning at Belleview, met the captain of the assaulting squadron—who would never charge again, for two clumsy crutches took the place of the left leg, lost above the knee—and his sad-faced guide, now an officer of distinguished record, even though for the time at least, like himself, a prisoner.

That conference was one that speedily bore fruit. It was soon after Chickamauga, bloodiest battle of the western war, when from the summits of both Lookout Mountain and Mission Ridge the victorious Southerners looked down upon their almost helpless foemen, penned like cattle in Chattanooga, that a dramatic and exciting scene took place in the camp of Sheridan's division. They were sore-headed men, for, just as at Stone River, they had lost a noble and beloved brigade commander. Caught in the whirl, stricken in flank and never having a "square show" from start to finish, they had been swept from the field without a chance to hit back. Then, as though to punish them for what they could not well prevent, the corps of McCook and Crittenden were telescoped into one, renumbered the Fourth. Their old Generals were ordered north to answer for their misfortune to a court of inquiry. A new commander was put at the head of the new corps, and even the rumor that the man the whole army honored was to become chief of the Army of the Cumberland failed to reconcile many a soldier to the inevitable parting with their brilliant leader, "Old Rosey." There were sore hearts all about the intrenched camps

of Chattanooga. There were sore heads on the Southern side, for though Bragg had driven the Union right in disorder from the field of Chickamauga, even with overwhelming numbers he could not budge Thomas at the left, and the fearful loss of twenty thousand killed and wounded in the Confederate host attested the desperate nature of the conflict.

They were talking of the situation at Sheridan's headquarters one crisp October evening, but the little chief himself was fitful and preoccupied. He was evidently thinking of other matters, while certain brigade and regimental commanders were seated about the campfire, and the talk was brisk and at times pointed. Sheridan seemed consumed with impatience. Every now and then he arose and moved restlessly about, gazing off into the darkness where lay the road to town. Tattoo was sounding in many a regimental camp about him before the sound of horses' feet squashing in the mud announced the coming of visitors, and an aide-de-camp in a low tone said: "Here they are, General."

Just outside the circle of firelight there dismounted three officers, who, leaving their horses with the orderly, came slowly forward and saluted the chief, who led them within a big hospital tent, and briefly saying "the other" would be here in a minute, bade them be seated. Some camp lanterns stood on a pine table. Two others hung from the ridgepole and a third was dimly glowing in a smaller tent at the rear, its opening abutting against the back of a larger one. The

flap was down, but there was murmured conversation going on which seemed to cease abruptly as two officers joined the party in the office tent. There was a cordial exchange of greeting on the part of most of those present, but manifest and sudden nervousness and embarrassment in the manner of at least one—Major Malloy, of the —th Ohio. Colonel Pride, with a slight limp still perceptible in his walk, crossed over and shook hands cordially with Major Lane of the judge-advocate's department, who had ridden out from town accompanied by Colonel Bob Enyart, now commanding the —th Kentucky, and one of Sheridan's aids. Malloy shook hands effusively with Lane, who looked a bit bewildered, but when the young major turned as though to offer his hand to the Kentucky colonel, that gentleman was engrossed in lively exchange of banter with his comrade eagle-bearer from the Buckeye State. Malloy's portly colonel looked oddly from one to another. It was apparent to him at once that something unusual was in the wind. As for Enyart and Pride, they now commanded rival regiments. "Bob" had his heart's desire—one, at least—at last.

Then Sheridan, who had stepped an instant into the little tent in the rear, returned, dropping the flap behind him, and the party settled into seats.

"Colonel Enyart," said the chief, "will state the object of the meeting."

"Concisely, General, it is this," said Bob. "Lieutenant Holt of my regiment is wounded and

a prisoner in the hands of the enemy. We of Kentucky regard him as a most gallant officer and a thoroughbred gentleman. We have been striving for his exchange, but there is a hitch because of stories vastly to his discredit that have been brought to corps and army headquarters, as Major Lane here can tell us. Mr. Holt is defenseless in his absence, and his friends have taken this matter up. The stories have been traced, without exception, to an officer now present—Major Malloy of your division. A court being out of the question, we have asked you to hear both sides and adjudicate. I now ask Major Malloy to repeat in this presence the story he has told Major Lane and a dozen other officers reflecting on the character of Lieutenant Holt."

There was an awful silence. Lane perceptibly winced at Enyart's almost abrupt announcement. Malloy turned almost gray. This was something far different from whispering to individual ears.

"I don't recognize the colonel's right," he finally began, looking nervously and appealingly at the division commander, who, having seated himself with his back to the table, was gazing straight into Malloy's twitching face.

"Well, I've heard these stories," said Sheridan, sharply. "I'm responsible for that officer's appointment, and if he's unworthy I have a right to know it, and why. We needn't go into that matter of sleeping on post. That the President has settled. You are reported as having said you could prove he led Wing's squadron into ambuscade. By whom?"

"By Captain Wing himself, General, if he were not a prisoner, and by non-commissioned officers who rode with them that night."

"How do you know this, Major? You haven't seen Captain Wing since the affair."

Malloy's face was white, and well it might be, but his nerve was steady. He must face the music now or go to ruin on the spot, and he realized it. The answer came, and it was given with unflinching eyes, with a voice that never trembled.

"I have not seen him, sir, but I have seen his letter, giving detailed account of the affair, in which he clearly shows that Mr. Holt knew of the presence of the rebel cavalry at Belleview, and that after giving warning to them, he deliberately led Wing into the trap."

The silence that followed was impressive and for the moment intense. Sheridan sat glowering into the speaker's face, as though half dazed by the cool, confident words, and half disposed to further questioning. Whatever were his emotions, they were speedily put to flight. Whirling abruptly toward the rear of the tent he signaled to a blonde-mustached captain who stood at the flap, and who quickly raised it, revealing to those who happened to be looking that way a tall figure; a gaunt, thin-faced, haggard man, who swung a pace or two forward on his crutches, and in a voice in which contempt, disdain, and wrath were mingled, deliberately said:

"That's a damned lie, Malloy, and you know it!"

CHAPTER XXV

A DOUBLE ESCAPE

The Fourth Corps was in a ferment; the Second Division almost in a tempest, of which Harker's Brigade was the vortex. There was a vacancy in the office of major —th Ohio. Officers from half a dozen Kentucky regiments were out with kindling eyes and chips on their shoulder-straps. Gaffney—major at last of the Buckeyes—was going from camp to camp taking two fingers to Kentucky's one in every toddy, sparing neither his own stomach nor anybody's Monongahela, which was worth a dollar a drink and couldn't be bought for money. Wing, "with the left leg gone and the right leg left," as Gaffney said, was the hero of the hour, but the case for Malloy had been left without even one leg to stand on. Colonel Pride of the Buckeyes, but recently returned from leave, with an abundant supply of ardent hopes, a moderate ditto of spirits, and an expressed opinion of Senator Malloy that will not bear publication, invited the officers to his tent to drink "Long life to the lad that ought to be one of us and confusion to the cad that prevented it!" while the Emmets invited themselves to a near-by ravine, where many were found in the morning along with an empty "kag," filched

when much more than half full from the colonel's tent during the dead hours of the night.

Oh, but that was a wondrous night in the Second Division! Such was the close contact of men and brethren in those crowded camps that the story of the scene at Sheridan's tent was all over the corps within twenty-four hours, with additions and improvements that made it a mad success. One thing, however, as told, was probably true—Malloy had gone to the devil or the enemy, and few men seemed to care which. Not only had Wing denounced him as a liar and declared that he had never written such a letter, but also as a scoundrel who would drug a man's coffee that he might swear him to death for sleeping on post. This, too, in the presence and hearing of Sheridan, of Colonel Pride of the Buckeyes, Enyart of the Kentuckies, and even the portly chief of Malloy's own regiment, the —th Ohio. Wing declared that when Connelly was told in prison by Dr. Holt that Malloy had sworn before the Nashville court that he, Connelly, had crossed that bridge without orders of any kind, and that Norman Holt was asleep on post, the wrath of the wronged and suffering soldier was intense. He wept in his weakness as he declared that Norman's story was absolutely true—that Malloy did say, "Go; it would be a feather in the cap of the Emmets." It was then at last the poor fellow realized that his officer had made a victim of him in order to clear the way for his plot against Holt. It was then that he announced his remembering having seen the lieutenant recorking that canteen after

slipping something into it that, at the time, honest Connelly supposed was only sugar. Sheridan and his officers, springing from their chairs, stood almost spellbound as Wing launched his furious denunciation at the luckless Malloy. Major Lane alone remained seated as though stunned, his face concealed for a time in his hands. Vainly had Malloy stormed, protested, and countered. "I shall demand a court of inquiry at once, General," said he. "And as for this gentleman, he shall answer to me personally for this infamous affront." Then he had begged permission to retire that he might instantly make his demand in writing, and not a hand was extended either to support or to withhold. That was their last look on the face of Burnett Malloy.

When early in the morning a staff officer rode to the camp of the —th Ohio with orders to place the major in close arrest there was no such functionary to be found. A light was burning in his tent when his one friend, the colonel, returned, stunned and silent from that dramatic arraignment, but he could not stomach having to speak with Malloy again. The only man of the regiment to see him that night was a lone sentry, pacing his post on the flank of camp back of the field officers' tents. The major had given the countersign and passed out about three o'clock in the morning, "carrying a thing like a bag." The surrounding camps, the town, the road to Lookout, were searched, the whole neighborhood scoured, for there were several officers, notably Major Lane, who thought that in Malloy's de-

spair, realizing as he must that his career was ruined, that his resignation could never be accepted, that dismissal in disgrace and probably incarceration in some penitentiary would be his fate, the cornered man had committed suicide.

But the following night the pickets out to the southeast brought in two ragged Georgians who had slipped away from the Southern lines, in which they declared they were unwillingly serving, and they united in the statement that a Yankee officer, a major, had been captured by their outposts about four in the morning. Everybody saw at once what that meant—Malloy had deserted to the enemy.

It was a week of episodes and excitements on both sides. Bragg's headquarters at the time were on the summit of Mission Ridge, straight to the east from Sheridan's line, and overlooking the valley and the Union camps. What happened there could not be known to Sheridan's division at the time, but can readily be told here. The picket lines of the opposing forces in front of Chattanooga were but a few yards apart, and stretched from the Tennessee at the mouth of Citico Creek, a mile east of the town, down through the open country midway between the Union intrenchments and a heavily wooded mound called Orchard Knob, until they faced each other along the banks of the Chattanooga Creek at the south, and so on to the point where, at the northern base of Lookout Mountain, the creek empties into the Tennessee. Now, it was no easy matter for any man to slip out across that line

except on a dark night, but, once across, it was a very easy thing to attract the attention of the enemy's sentries and be "taken prisoner." This, it eventually turned out, was Malloy's method of procedure.

Just where he managed to cross the Union line, and how, whether by bribery or adroitness, could not be ascertained. But the Georgia pickets claimed the credit of gobbling a Yankee major, who, when brought to Bragg's headquarters in broad daylight, declared he had wandered between the lines while making the rounds, had lost his way, and found himself right under the muzzles of the southern Enfields. The sharp, stern order, "Come in here, Yank!" brought him to his senses all too late. He obeyed because there was nothing else to do. The story sounded plausible for the time being. Major Malloy gave his name, rank, and regiment without hesitation, begged that his comrades might be informed by flag of truce that he was safe, uninjured, and that he urged them to exert every influence to effect his exchange at once. He courteously asked to be excused from giving any information. Indeed, he really had none, especially about Sheridan's movements or the coming of re-enforcements. In point of fact, Major Malloy made a very pleasant impression until, as luck would have it, a cynic appeared in the person of Major Henry Holt of the commanding General's staff. Up to the moment of that officer's entry the prisoner's manner had been calm and self-possessed; then it became instantly nervous and embarrassed. Up to that

moment, too, the manner of the Confederate officers had been courteous, though somewhat cold and formal, but the expression in Holt's face as he stood sternly gazing at the new-comer was too significant.

"You gentlemen seem to have met before," said the General, looking quickly from one to the other.

"Yes," was Holt's instant answer, "and there's only one way, General, in which I desire to meet that—gentleman again."

Explanations, of course, followed, and that evening Malloy was on his way to prison, minus boots and reputation. Henry Holt, in a few words, had punctured the latter, to the end that no officer was at hand to save when a rude trooper relieved his prisoner of the former. Such transactions, under the cloak of "fair exchange," were already a military necessity in an army where sole-leather was at a premium.

One caution went with the guards of the self-sacrificed major on his southward way. It was considered wise to keep him for the present aloof from certain other prisoners from Ohio and Kentucky—Connelly having by this time spread abroad the story of the major's crime. It was well, too, that there was little likelihood of his coming in connection with Dr. Holt or Norman. It was odd that, though Norman declined to accept parole, and was now quite strong again, he had not been sent to join the luckless array of Union officers captured at Chickamauga or previous engagements, and now numerous in the several soldier prisons in Dixie. The fractured bone

had knit, the wound was healing, and, enjoying the best of care and attention, he was restricted to the limits of the hospital square in Rome. With his own father ever at hand to counsel and supervise, the recovery had been rapid. The doctor had hired a buggy, picked up a horse too old for military service, and with these was able to give his boy occasional drives, both being "on honor," of course, at such times, to take no undue advantage of the privilege. Early in September, when McCook's corps reached Alpine, only a few miles away, the post commander took alarm, and proposed moving his prisoners southward, but McCook speedily marched on toward the Chickamauga valley. The great battle followed. The invading army was securely penned up at Chattanooga, and vigilance at Rome and Dalton was relaxed. Henry sent his body servant, one of the Belleview boys, who had been devoted to the brothers from their babyhood, to wait on his father, and do what he could—do everything he could, in fact—for Marse Norman. And this was the situation so far as the Holts were concerned at the time of Malloy's voluntary move into hostile territory.

"Norman and he must not meet," said Major Holt to his friend, the chief of staff, as the disgraced officer was led away. "What if Malloy and Norman Holt should meet," was the suggestion that occurred to Enyart, who lost no time in writing to Kate Ray of Malloy's collapse. "What if Malloy and Norman do meet?" said Gaffney and the surviving Emmets, filled with

Hibernian concern at thought of missing the sight of the resultant fracas. "What if Theodore and Malloy again meet," thought Major Lane, vaguely dreading it as something sure to involve his feather-brained son in further trouble.

The meeting Lane so feared came off that very night, at Dalton, where Theodore had been sent with the dispensary of the Confederate hospital. And that temptation should be set in Theodore's way, and he fall into the toils, might readily be foretold. The father's forebodings were destined to be realized, but that was all, for on the fifth morning after the escape of Major Malloy from Sheridan's lines, the division woke up electrified by the news that honors were easy—that a Confederate officer of equal rank had been caught by the pickets in front of the right and taken to Sheridan's tent at reveille. Barely was the story started when another followed—that the captured soldier was none other than Major Henry Holt.

Bob Enyart was just turning out when the acting adjutant came hastening in with the news. Bob changed color and said he reckoned there must be a mistake. Henry Holt wasn't a man "to be foolin' round outside his picket line when there was no occasion for such—foolishness;" but the adjutant was insistent; Captain Preston, officer of the day, saw him as he was escorted to division headquarters, and if it wasn't Henry Holt, then he didn't know a Holt from a handsaw. Enyart was troubled. There was another letter to Kate Ray, finished the night before, all ready to go at once by cavalry post over the Cumber-

lands, and the orderly would call for it at seven. There was time, just time, for a postscript, provided the story were true. He knew full well how important a piece of information that might be. He knew that all through the gallant regiment which he now had the honor to command, it was believed that Kate Ray, if not actually engaged to Harry Holt, would be the instant she could say the word. Bob was a gentleman and a soldier, and Kate Ray was "all the world" in his eyes. All might be fair in love and war, but only when it was fair and chivalric. Such was his Kentucky code. "Tell the mail orderly not to go till I come back," said he to his servant, as he hurriedly dressed, then hastened to division headquarters.

Yes, there at the tent of the adjutant-general stood a squad of muddy men in blue, with the unmistakable, up-all-night look of the picket guard in the face of the foe. The General had been called and was dressing, said the field officer of the day, who came hurriedly forth and looked about, impatient. A tall, blonde-mustached, blue-eyed aide-de-camp, yawning sleepily, squeezed between the front flaps of his rain-stiffened tent, and said, "Where is he?" Whereat the officer of the day jerked a thumb over his shoulder at the office tent, and thither strode the captain. "Who is it?" demanded Colonel Bob, as the staff officer drew nigh. "Major Holt, Bragg's staff, by Jupiter," said the interrogated officer, never stopping. Bob's honest heart began to ache and to ask whether Kelly's Island, Sandusky or Columbus would be

Major Henry's probable destination. Of course he would have to go *via* Louisville, and of course, if she knew she'd be there to console him as he passed through. There was still time to write that postscript. Perhaps, after all, he ought to see for himself. It would only be civil and courteous to inquire what he could do for the captive.

Besides, he was Norman's brother. And so, not too blithely, Bob waded on—it was wofully muddy—to where the tent flaps stood invitingly open, just as the little General came shoving out of his domicile, buttoning the last of the eighteen glistening semi-globes that adorned the front of his double-breasted frock. The aid's voice was heard saying "Why, hullo!" which didn't seem exactly appropriate. A tall, slender soldier in Confederate gray, his sleeve heavily braided with gold, stood revealed, his back turned to Enyart, his face to the aid. The Kentucky colonel saluted the division commander, who cheerily sung out "Morning, Enyart," as was his wont, and pushed impetuously in at the entrance; then stopped short, gazed, exclaimed, "Well, by Jove! I supposed there was some mistake when they told me. Too much luck, you know, to catch the same fellow twice, but I'd have known you if we hadn't met before—so like your brother." Whereupon the aid could contain himself no longer, but chuckled aloud in his glee. The prisoner himself beamed joyfully. The General stared, whacked the gray tunic in the broad of the back, then took the wearer delightedly by the hand. "Holt

—God bless my soul! how did you do it?" he cried, and Enyart, springing forward, his eyes dilating with amaze, came face to face with Norman.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LEAP OF THE LINE

Little time was there to tell to the rejoicing brigade the story of that episode. Literally had Hannibal, son of Harkless, obeyed his master's instructions as to the younger brother among the prisoners at Rome. An old Southern inn had been used as a hospital for such Union officers as were sorely wounded or too ill to be sent farther South. Henry made occasional visits from the front and Hannibal went unmolested to and fro. Great news reached them. Grant was at Chattanooga. Sherman was coming with four strong divisions, marching up the Tennessee, and Hooker and Howard had joined with their corps from the Army of the Potomac, and everybody knew there would be music before the end of the month. Then came tidings that all prisoners should be started southward within the week. Dr. Holt was away at the moment. A remarkable thing had occurred. A political speaker of the balloon type having announced from the Ohio stump that he was ashamed to live in the United States, ashamed to dwell under the wing of a government that would attempt to coerce the seceding States, had been actually taken at his word by a bewhiskered General, who would stand no nonsense, and to the amaze and discomfiture of State

Senator Malloy, his political file leader was politely sent over the line to the South. With General Burnside's compliments, Mr. Vallandigham of Ohio was transferred to Dixie, where they had no earthly use for him.

One man, however, had need to see him—Dr. Holt, who had questions to ask concerning Mr. Malloy and meant to have an answer. The doctor was gone when the rumor came as to the prospective move of the prisoners. It was perhaps an only chance and Norman took it. Henry's luggage, in part, was stored at Dalton. Hannibal had little trouble—and no compunctions—in abstracting therefrom a worn suit of uniform. Southern officers came and went about the halls and corridors at all hours, and one evening a tall, distinguished major of staff strolled forth soon after the second relief had been posted on the square, was passed with the customary honors, and, mounting a horse in the adjoining block, was away to Alpine, bound for the Chattanooga valley. At four in the morning Confederate pickets were passing him toward the front, "riding with dispatches," as he said. At dawn he tarried near the head of McLemore's Cove, where at nightfall another negro found him, as prearranged, bringing a fresh horse and provisions. By that time all Rome knew of the escape, but no one could explain it. The second night, guided by the negro through many a bypath, he at last, toward daybreak, and on foot now, slipped between the sentries along lower Chattanooga Creek, and "surrendered" at the hail of Sheridan's

pickets a mile out from camp. He was safe within the Yankee lines, and shaking hands with Buckeyes and Kentuckians by the score, when the news was broken to Henry in his roost on Mission Ridge.

That was one valuable accession to the old brigade before the coming battle, and the resources of brother officers were taxed to fit him out with "regimentals." The Emmets' beautiful sword, sash, and belt, the natty uniform he wore when shot and captured, were spoils of war that disappeared before even his father reached him on the McMinnville plateau. There was another accession, neither valuable nor requiring uniform, but one that created almost as lively an excitement as did the coming of Norman Holt—one that was "taken up" on the morning report of the Emmets as from November 20th, ten days after the flight of Malloy—Private Theodore Lane from "deserted" to "present in confinement."

And when the Emmets heard the poor lad's story the rage against Malloy redoubled. "There is joy over the sinner that repenteth," but there was genuine grief among many of the rough fellows of Company "C" at sight of the new prisoner's suffering. Assured by Malloy at Dalton that the charge of desertion against him had virtually been removed; that amnesty was declared for deserters who returned and reported for duty; and then entrusted with urgent messages as well as a written scrawl to Malloy Sr., Theodore had been hoodwinked into an attempt to escape from the Confederate lines, had been

discovered, fired upon as he fled, and though he reached the Union picket, it was only to fall in terror and exhaustion; an Enfield bullet had pierced him through and through. The surgeons said he might linger a few weeks, but he had neither the stamina nor the constitution to survive. Borne painfully to hospital at Chattanooga, he would have suffered even more but for the assiduous care of Norman Holt. It was at the cot side that at last there met again the young Kentucky soldier and the father of the broken, contrite boy, and as Lane looked into Norman's face with eyes that filled and lips that twitched uncontrollably, he wondered if the young man knew what was uppermost in his thoughts—that this blow seemed almost like retribution. Yet the two pressed hands, gravely, sadly. There was no reproach by word or look. Then Norman had to go. "To arms" was sounding at the front. Sherman was in hiding beyond the northward screen of hills. The pontoons were at the river above and below—the tug of war was coming.

Will it ever be forgotten?—that soft November morning, when the mists hung low on the slopes of the mountains, veiling the valleys north and south, wreathing the placid flood of the Tennessee, rolling in fleecy billows along the rugged scarp of old Lookout, as the guns flashed and thundered on the mighty hilltops, crowning the crests with smoke wreaths, white as the clouds beneath, while from the level plains below, midway between the flanking hosts in gray, the men of the Army of the Cumberland woke the echoing

crags with mad cheers of delight, as, bursting through the shrouding vapor, peering above the veil, glinting, sparkling in the morning sunshine, the bayonets of Hooker gleamed along the heights, and from the very point and pinnacle of the grand old mountain, seen by friend and foe alike through wide miles of glorious landscape, the Stars and Stripes were thrown to the breeze, telling the glad news to a waiting host, to a well-nigh distracted nation, that the siege of Chattanooga was raised; that the lofty stronghold of a valiant and vigorous foe was won; that at last the rebel left was turned.

And now, with Sherman and their old allies of the Army of the Tennessee bearing down upon the enemy's right, hewing mightily at the northward defenses of Mission Ridge, the men whom Buell trained and "Rosey" maneuvered and Thomas gloriously fought in battle, chafed and clamored for their share in the headlong fight. In beautiful array they had been marched out upon the plain, so accurate the alignment, so machine-like the maneuvers, that Bragg and his men gazed long and admiringly, believing it all to be some formation for a grand review. But every cartridge box and pocket was crammed. The lean haversacks of the weeks gone by had been fattened with jealously hoarded rations. Every available man was at his post and in every heart was the soldier longing to wipe out once and for all the woes of the past—the bitter memories of the left at Perryville, of the right at Stone River and Chickamauga. These who were sweep-

ing the foe from the range to the west were of the Army of the Potomac, with the glory of Gettysburg agleam on their banners. These who were storming southward at the range to the east were of the Army of the Tennessee—victors of Donelson and Vicksburg; and here on the plain, facing full front on Bragg's challenging center, gazing aloft on a line of heights bristling with guns in battery, seamed with intrenchments, crowned from north to south with the blue-barred, blood-red battle flags of the South—here were men of the same brain and brawn and lineage, begging only for opportunity to show their mettle, and yet being unaccountably held in leash. A black rumor was going the rounds that Grant had written to Sherman, or said to somebody, that "these men of Thomas's were so demoralized by Chickamauga that they couldn't be got out of their trenches" to fight. Yet here they were well out of the trenches. There was the foe flaunting his flags in their very faces. What mattered it that the heights were heavily held and fortified?—that fifty guns were trained upon them?—that thirty thousand veterans with steady nerves and vengeful eyes lined those ugly red parapets from right to left? The men of the Cumberland cursed the very skirmish line that covered their front, and clamored for the word to go ahead and finish what they had so well begun. Ever since Monday afternoon, when they held that bogus review, and in sudden dash had driven the foe from Orchard Knob and his foremost line of rifle pits, had they of the center,

Thomas's own men, been compelled to hang fire, as it were, to watch each successive and triumphant sweep of Hooker from the right and rear, to listen to Sherman volleying far out to their left front, and to digest in rising wrath the bitter things said of them by fellows who had never seen them fight, being occupied with easier propositions elsewhere in the field.

All day of the 24th—Tuesday—while Sherman hammered unavailingly at Tunnel Hill, these men, so little understood by the strangers in high command, watched, waited, and marveled. Obedient to the restraining orders, they had halted at the captured works, even though the enemy was in full flight for the refuge of his second line at the foot of the ridge. Now, as they madly cheered the advance of Hooker when, sharp and clear, Wednesday morning came, all along their eager, murmuring front the word was going from man to man, "No stop next time, boys!" And the grim, silent soldier, waiting there on Orchard Knob in stolid patience for the onward sweep of his own old favorite, Sherman—a sweep that seemed unaccountably delayed—turned at last to that equally silent subordinate, the man who so loyally served his country and the successive officers appointed over him, no matter how they might differ in mold or manner, and gave the long withheld consent for the men of the Cumberland to go in.

It was then long after noon. Hooker was far out up the valley, heading for Rossville Gap, but halted at the swollen creek. Sherman was still

far over toward the Tennessee, his fighting divisions held by the splendid stand of the men in gray. Grant, impassive, yet displeased, had thought to see that stern resistance ended by Hooker's dash at the Southern left and rear. But, never heeding what was doing elsewhere, Hardee still savagely opposed, and Sherman stormed in vain. The day was going by without decisive result. It was now the turn of the men "so demoralized by Chickamauga that they wouldn't come out of their trenches." Swift flew the aids to the division commanders. Swift went the word along the chafing, curbing ranks, and men took a hitch in the waist belts, a shift at the rolled blankets, and a glance right and left as they sprang into line. Six guns from the Knob—quick throbbing like a frigate's salute—would be the signal for the advance, and at the bang of the very first, just at 3.30, you could hear the clinching of teeth in Sheridan's lines, and the low muttered "Now, by God, let's show 'em!" Quick as followed the five they couldn't come quick enough. Even before the fourth report some bugler sounded "Skirmishers, forward," and the doubled rank sprang to its feet and started. Second in line from the right, Sheridan's eager division got wind of the signal, their little chief burning with impatience and hitching forward in saddle as was his wont when mad to push out in the lead. All along the battalion fronts, all along the reserves, everywhere from right to left men's lips were moving—not in prayer—only in counting those rhythmic, fateful shots. Then, eyes

to the front, touch to the center, guide on the colors, silent, but with a storm of pent-up vim and zeal and soldier wrath straining at every breast, up rose the division and away it swept across the eastward field.

On their right, almost aligned, trudged the brigades of Johnson; on their left their old comrades of Wood's three brigades; farther still the lines of Baird. Four fine divisions were they, all envious of the opportunities given these strangers from distant fields, and emulous of each other. "Carry the rebel rifle pits at the foot of the ridge, then halt and wait for orders!" Such was the word to the men of the Cumberland.

But now, even over the muffled tramp, tramp, one can hear low-muttered, terse, significant phrase: "Carry the pits? Devil doubt you, my lad, but—'halt and wait,'—with the Tennessees watching on one side and the Potomacs on the other? Well, we'll see about that when we get there!" "Demoralized by Chickamauga, is it?" "Won't come out of our works, won't we?" "Want us to halt in somebody else's works, I think you said! We can teach you a trick worth a dozen of that!" It is the growl of the men from the west as the scabbards clack at the striding thighs and the pace irresistibly quickens. "Steady there! Touch to the center! Dress to the right!" shout left-wing file closers in each battalion. "Dress to the left!" snarl they of the right wing. Something's got into those muddy brogans—something all the shouting and swearing and steadying from far left to fast footing

right won't stop or suppress. Away up on the heights are men who mark the onward sweep of the lines—men who, better than Grant or Sherman, perhaps, know the temper of the men of the Cumberland. Bragg fairly rushes his aids with swift summons to right and left to "close in" and support the center, where black-eyed Breckinridge, stern and anxious, watches the coming storm. Cream of the west are the men in those striding lines on the plain below. Buckeye and Hoosier, Badger and Wolverine, men of Missouri, Minnesota, Kansas, and Kentucky. Iowa alone has no regiment there. Her hard-fighting sons are massed under Sherman in the lines of the old Tennessee. Well may the gloom deepen in the eyes of the great Kentuckian, holding Bragg's imperiled center on the ridge, for in the foremost lines of Wood and Sheridan, in five eager battalions, the flag of his own State waves side by side with that of the Union. It is indeed brother against brother this day!

Seven-leagued boots are these worn brogans in the Cumberland's array. The stride has lengthened, quickened, and at the roar of the rebel guns on the heights and the shriek of the coming shell, first one man, then another—first one battalion, then another—the march becomes a dog trot; quick time changes to the double, and then, as the breastworks blaze with sudden fire and the Enfield lead comes hissing through the lines, up goes a mighty shout that drowns every order, even sound of bugle, and in furious, tumultuous charge, cheering as they dart and leap and run,

straight at the works at the foot of the slope go the men of the blue brigades. Over the parapet rails they pour, leaping the shallow trenches, blazing at the backs of the scurrying foe, seizing the laggards; raging and scowling at their own officers, who, riding furiously up and down their front, check the wild pursuit, drive back the leaders, and struggle hard and loyally to carry out the order as given, "Halt at the trenches till further orders!"

But the blood of the two corps—Fourth and Fourteenth—is boiling within them. Halt is a hard word when so much can be won. In Sheridan's center are two battalions that fairly raced for the prize and leaped side by side into the trenches, Enyart's and Pride's—Kentucky and Ohio—and it has taken all their leaders could do to check their way. Bob, dismounted by a fragment of shell that tore the tendons from his charger's leg, strides up and down his panting line, speaking soothingly to his long-legged kinsfolk, while his tall adjutant faces the colors at the center and forbids the sergeants to budge. It is Norman Holt's first charge with his own regiment, and his heart is high as the ridge before him—its crest only five hundred yards away.

Just to their left, on the flank of a comrade brigade, a battalion of Badgers has been brought to unwilling halt, their adjutant, too, in front of the colors, their field officers, like many another along the line, leaping from saddle, for, now that their own are out of the way, the Southern riflemen all along the crest blaze down at the de-

fenseless foe, and, with trail plates kicking high in air, "Light Twelves" and six-pounders in rude redoubts drive a plunging fire of case and canister tearing down the hillside. Thick and fast the iron hail beats on the unsheltered hosts—four splendid divisions, full panoplied, eager and raging for close combat, held back in the moment of triumph. Man after man in the ranks wonders at the order—even deems it a blunder. The very bayonet seems to have its brain to realize the utter cruelty of that halt. If ordered to charge at all it should have been to charge home. Then, pell-mell, with the pursued, they could have rushed up the slope, unscathed by Southern lead, for the guns dared not shoot for fear of mowing down their own. Now they must face the muzzles of a sheltered line if permitted to advance at all. Sheridan and his staff, dismounted, are back of a little hut that gives scant cover from the storm, and Sheridan is shaking his fist. Here, there, and everywhere along the brigades men roll over in the grasp of death. The halt is simply murderous, the sacrifice too much to ask of mortal man, and again the wild murmur and mutter goes maddening along the line. By heaven! must the Army of the Cumberland forever be placed in the wrong? Must its lot be ever to suffer and never to do? Enyart is raging in rear of his men. Pride is damning the Emmets—who won't lie still. Gaffney is waddling up and down in front of his wing, cursing the fates in his choicest vernacular, and Norman Holt is kneeling by the side of his stricken color-bearer, for an Enfield has

bored the tall sergeant's lungs, and the silken folds are deluged with blood before their rescuer can bear them aloft. There is something electric in the sight of their sudden lifting. Men are so eager for a signal, for an excuse of any kind, that as the flag swings forward so surges the line. Backward they will not go—anywhere better than that! for there on Orchard Knob stands the stern commander who declared them demoralized. Forty yards forward there is partial shelter under the steep, and so, as Norman rises, up rises the rank, and all on a sudden from a dozen points along the captured works, in squads, then in companies, men begin to forge ahead, some merely for shelter, but more full bent for attack, and before the generals can begin to realize what is coming, "Thinking Bayonets" has taken command for the time, and in spite of all orders the Cumberland has sprung to the charge. For a moment hoarse shoutings are heard, "Halt! halt!" "Go back, there! Lie down, there!" but only for a moment. Buckeye and Badger have started a race. Kentucky cuts loose from the trench where its stricken are lying—God and the surgeons must care for them now. One backward glance Enyart gives toward the commanders. Harker is springing into saddle. Sheridan, so far from storming out orders to stop it, is certainly swinging his hat; and, facing front once more, Colonel Bob sees his adjutant long strides ahead of the nearmost, breasting the slope, high waving the flag and loudly shouting "Come on!" And then away to the right, away to the left, whole battal-

ions scramble up from the pits and spring for the heights, Sheridan's center the guide of the line.

Out to the front leap the colors. Up into saddles swing field and staff. Haste ye, cavaliers! for nimble feet are far in the lead sounding their own rataplan. This is no General's planning. This is no star-led assault. It's the charge of the ranks! It's the leap of the line! Up from the lowlands sweep the battalions, cheering like mad. Officers, swinging their caps on the points of the sword, rush out or ride out in front of their men, who heed not—who need not. This is their benefit. This is their own battle. The bayonets flash over the third line of works, midway up the rise, and now all the long hillside is streaked and seamed with blue, waving, sagging, yet ever moving onward and upward; and the grim commander of the united armies stares speechless at them from the rocky, wooded knoll far to the rear, and at last demands of Thomas: "Who ordered that charge?"

Who ordered it? The brain of the American soldier—the horse sense of "Thinking Bayonets," for now they are away up the slope, crashing in among the batteries, straddling the log parapets, volleying into the very face of the defenders, shooting down the opposing battle flags, and, never halting, never swerving, straight they go, Wood and Sheridan, Baird and Johnson almost aligned, but Sheridan hitting square at the center, driving Bragg, Breckinridge, and a dozen of brilliant staff and general officers from their last covert at the summit of the ridge, waving the

brilliant hues of the old and beloved flag above captured guns, redoubts, and even rank after rank of bewildered, gray-clad infantry, cut off from all possibility of escape. Then at last, just one vivid, thrilling hour from the sound of the first gun that signaled the advance, as they range up at the crest, monarchs of all they survey, Ohio and Wisconsin, Illinois and Kentucky are cheering each other, cheering their officers, cheering themselves—aye, in their soldier rejoicing, cheering the grimy, crestfallen "Johnnies" in the nearest trenches. And over near Bragg's vacated headquarters, where the generals are fast gathering for mutual congratulation, a tumultuous throng of Buckeyes and Kentuckians surges about a little group, where Colonel Bob, bleeding from a bullet wound he had hardly noticed, is still in saddle, waving those precious colors above his handsome head, while Sheridan, once more afoot, is clasping the hand of Kentucky's gallant adjutant, who, faint from exertion and loss of blood, is propped against the flag-staff, while the surgeon binds an ugly gash in his side—a bayonet thrust that well-nigh cost Norman Holt his life, but that could not stop him, as, foremost of all, he burst through the wavering line of defenders and, slashing the halliards with his keen sword, brought fluttering to earth the flag of the South—Chickamauga was avenged!

CHAPTER XXVII

VICTORY

Then followed glorious days in the field and solemn hours in the hospitals about Chattanooga. Great had been the Union victory of Mission Ridge, but that enforced halt at the foot of the slope had cost the Cumberlands dear. For two days, and with four divisions, the Tennessees had battered long about Tunnel Hill, losing some fifteen hundred men and gaining little or nothing, while Sheridan and Wood, with the men "demoralized by Chickamauga," in their two divisions alone, and in a single hour, had lost in killed and wounded—not a man missing—eight hundred more than Sherman's whole array of casualties, and in spite of such heavy loss had refused to be checked, had stormed Bragg's center, captured forty cannon, six thousand stands of arms, and five thousand prisoners; had split up the whole corps and driven it every which way. However, it was Sherman, with his famous marchers, who was sent in pursuit, while the Cumberlands were divided up, some going northeast after Longstreet, some southeast after Bragg, some into hospital—and among these Bob Enyart again, with the brevet of brigadier-general for brilliant service and a bullet in the leg. With him, more-

over, for a brief fortnight, at least, was his gallant young adjutant, with that long gash in his side and a short paragraph in Sheridan's report that would have made him a major before he was a month older—but for another governor.

And during that month, spite of all that could be done by the skill of surgeons and the devoted nursing of mother and sister, Theodore's feeble life flickered away. He seemed conscious to the last, contrite, "humble as a little child." Death was, perhaps, a merciful solution of a vexed and serious problem, but what mother could be made to think so? "Unstable as water," swayed by every passing whim or fancy; his tastes and inclinations early vitiated by evil company abroad and unwise management at home, the lad was so far started on the downhill path that it is doubtful if he could have been rescued. But the mother ever fondly cherished the faith that he could and would, had it pleased God to spare him to her rather than to take him unto Himself, for all that was good and gentle and dependent in the boy came to the surface in that final fortnight. He was her blessed baby, her darling, once again, and the world and sin were forgotten. Yet there was jealous pain for her even in the contemplation of his ebbing life, for, more than ever before, the lad seemed now to lean on Norman Holt, to need him, to cling to him at the last. Though weak and in much pain from his wound, Norman was able to be about, and through the influence of Enyart, the efforts of Major Lane, and the favor of the commanding General, Theodore had been

borne from the field hospital and lodged beneath the roof where lay these wounded officers, and Norman, swiftly mending, could sit by the boy's bedside often for hours, to the neglect of his own colonel, and to the end that by the time that first detachment of anxious women—mothers, wives, and sisters—reached Chattanooga, the young Kentuckian was practically indispensable to the dying boy. Lane saw it and surrendered to it, and though Norman purposely absented himself the afternoon of the mother's arrival, it could not be for long. Theodore begged for him, begged his parents to help him undo the wrong he had done, begged Daisy to forget the wild accusations he had made in the mad moment of his arrest, and Major Lane went in search of Norman, and found him—his superior officer—notified that hour of his commission as lieutenant-colonel of Kentucky cavalry "for daring and dauntless leadership in battle at Stone River and Missionary Ridge." The governor had seen "Shurd'n's bet," as Gaffney put it, "and gone him wan betther."

Then, too, it transpired presently that while Theodore wanted Norman even after the coming of the women folk, Enyart didn't want him at all. The need for nurses afar back along the Ohio was not what it had been after Perryville and Stone River. It was urgent now on the Tennessee, where many brave lads lay sorely wounded. In the same patchwork train to Tullahoma with the Lanes came Bob's devoted mother. In that same train and of that same party was

Kate Ray. The railway was still a wreck in a dozen places, and the corps of doctors, attendants and nurses crossed the Cumberland range in ambulances and hired vehicles and landed on the Tennessee, laden with medicines and dainties sorely needed by the stricken. The matronly wing of Mrs. Lane gave the requisite conventional shelter to both girls, but it was the girls that supported the wing, for the poor mother had little strength or spirit with which to face the journey or to tend the sick. Mother and daughter had practically changed places, and Daisy, through anxiety, grief, and sense of responsibility, had matured and broadened beyond her years.

Those were days when men and women, too, developed with startling suddenness from careless boy and girlhood. Kate Ray's life for months had been spent in caring for the sick and wounded, and she came armed with the chief surgeon's indorsement to the effect that "in parting with the services of Miss Ray to enable her to take up still more arduous duties at the distant front," he felt it his duty to commend her to the military and medical authorities of the army as "a most zealous, capable, and efficient nurse," and he begged leave to add "a brave and admirable woman." Now Bob Enyart was selfish enough to want that most zealous, capable, and efficient nurse, that brave and admirable woman, all to himself, when he already had his own mother, and speedily began to fret himself into a fever because he could have so little of her. It was hard for Mrs. Enyart. Sometimes I wonder

if mothers do not find the pangs of maternity easier to bear than the realization that the darling boy craves another's ministering hand—that the beloved daughter is pining for another nest—that mother is, after all, not indispensable, and that some other is now Queen Paramount.

And it was a solemn scene at Theodore's bedside the evening of their coming. Pale from suffering and an emotion he could not entirely conceal, Norman Holt, leaning on the arm of the man who the year before had so coldly treated him, came into the presence of the mother who had turned him from her door. Daisy was not there.

"It is Colonel Holt now," faltered Lane, with an attempt at a smile.

"Colonel Holt!" feebly cried Theodore. "That's good—that's grand!"

"It is Norman in spite of all," answered the sorrowing woman, looking wistfully, pleadingly, into the pallid, clear-cut, manly face, as she half-timidly held forth both hands. Good God! What humility of suffering there is for the mother who turns from the wreck of her own hopes, from the death of all that was planned and prayed for in her first-born, and gazes upon the full fruition of effort and energy in the person of another—her boy's own friend and comrade! On the one hand lay her Ishmael, a useless life, a ruined career; on the other stood he who had so faithfully striven to befriend her weakling, he whom they had so despitefully treated, now a tried leader of men, tempered by adversity, tested through fire

and flood, crowned with the honor and acclamation of his soldier comrades, high in rank and command despite his youth, yet not so high but that, in pity and sympathy and forgiveness, he had stifled the sense of his own suffering that, day by day, he might succor their dying boy. With her face bowed upon Norman's hands, she was silently weeping when the door from an adjoining room opened, and Daisy came slowly in.

Not since the week of Theodore's arrest had he set eyes on her. That was only a year agone, yet all the girlish look had fled from her face, leaving it pathetic, sorrowful, yet inexpressibly sweet. It was the face of a woman chastened by anxiety and suffering, one in whom gentleness, tenderness, and devotion had triumphed over thought of self, and made a ministering angel to the aging and distressed. The mother had known that death would doubtless be the sentence of her son should he fall into the hands of the Union army, and all her thoughts had been of him and his peril. The daughter had had to carry a double load,—the knowledge that her father's affairs were going from bad to worse, that the investments prompted by the elder Malloy had been calamitous, and she had Malloy's word for it that now only he stood between that father and financial ruin. Malloy went further still. He had not scrupled to tell the daughter her father's good name was involved, as had been that of his deceased partner, McIntyre. All this for months the girl had had to bear in the determination that her mother should not hear it.

All this had Malloy been whispering into her ears in furtherance of the suit of his hopeful son. No wonder, as Kate Ray wrote, "Daisy looked as though she were going into a decline."

And then for long months she had known how hideously unjust was Theodore's accusation against the lover toward whom her young heart had leaned from the first—the lover whom she had spurned at her brother's and mother's demand—the lover whom they had all wronged, and, according to Malloy, whom the father had actually robbed, for trust money, too, said he, was involved in the father's speculations. What reward had Norman received at their hands for his devotion to her brother and to her?

It was but a few weeks after Theodore's arrest that she learned the falsity of his accusations—Kate Ray had seen to that—but meantime there was Norman's brief, cold reply to her letter, the check returned and her slight repaid in full. "I shall never again attempt to see you. After your letter I doubt if I shall ever care to." That was the last word between them, yet it would not have been the last, for she had nerved herself to write and tell him she knew the truth. Though she could not ask him to forgive or forget, she wished him to know she deplored their bitter injustice to him. No light-minded girl could have brought herself to such a sacrifice of maidenly pride, to such a pitch of self-abnegation—the possibility of being misunderstood—the shameful possibility that he might think her begging for the return of his love and trust. No—that she

assured herself was gone forever—insulted and outraged as it had been. It was the woman in her now prompting her at any cost to acknowledge her fault. It would have been easier to say, "I have sinned against thee" to any other soul on earth. But she had at last, after many attempts, written her confession, and then came the dread tidings of his desperate wound and capture. The story of his heroism came later—Kate Ray again. But that was nothing new. What could he ever be but brave, heroic, superb—her knight, her soldier, her hero, her lover, aye, her dearly loved one, though he should never know it—though he should never care to know—though he would probably come back a General in the by and by and marry "Kate-Sister" or pretty Lou Ward (who was smitten with one of Morgan's dashing raiders), or Lorna Walton, who wore the Confederate colors beneath her expensive bodice and could not see what so many men saw in Kate Ray! As for Daisy, she would devote herself to poor mother. She would nurse and soothe and work for her; and so, in gentle deeds of goodness, the child had lived through her year of penance, refusing to yield to the pleas of the Malloys, and the bud had become the blossom, sweet, sorrowing, uncomplaining, but far more lovable and womanly. And such was she who, with faltering footsteps, and timid yet resolute mien, came slowly forward, and Norman turned and saw her—saw in an instant the change the year had wrought, and the same old spasmodic seizure fastened on his throat and choked his

utterance. He could not speak. He stepped toward her, took her cold, fluttering little hand (and did not know he was holding it till she drew it away), gazing the while dumbly down into her pallid face, an infinite sorrow, sympathy, and tenderness outpouring from his big, brave heart and overflowing in his deep brown eyes. And, though he could not speak, she could and did. She knew she must, and had schooled herself beforehand, and even in her humility and in her trouble there was sweet womanly dignity in her bearing; there was confession mingled with womanly trust in her lovely eyes as they looked up one moment into his. Norman Holt was at least a gentleman, and could not, said she, misunderstand her. Yet was it not hard to have to meet him so?

"I ought not to say I am glad to see you here, since we owe that to your being again wounded. We can never thank you enough, Mr. Holt."

"It is Colonel Holt, now, Daisy," said her father, coming forward.

"It is just Norman, Theodore's friend," said he, finding voice at last, and striving to speak as though he would give her hope and reassurance, but she saw how little hope there was behind the conventional mask. There are men who can ride into battle laughing in the face of death, yet cannot so much as summon a smile when the King of Terrors sits by the bedside of another for whom women watch and pray. He knew that there need be no fear of earthly tribunal for the fast-failing son and brother. Perhaps it was better so.

Three days more—only three—were given to him in which to minister to Theodore, to strive to comfort and strengthen the sorrowing mother, to be of aid to the girl for whom all the old love seemed to be revived, redoubled. Of that it was no time to speak. One afternoon there came a dispatch. The colonel commanding the —th Kentucky Cavalry desired to know how soon the lieutenant-colonel could report for duty. There was urgent need of his services. Showing it to Enyart, Norman briefly said, "I start to-night," and Bob could only press his hand and say: "You're right."

But it was another matter to break it to the Lanes. He dreaded the effect on Theodore, so rapidly was he failing. It was Kate Ray again who came to Norman's aid. She had heard, and lost no time. "You are going without their knowing it, is not that your plan, Norman?" she asked, then quickly added, "But do you not wish to speak with Daisy?"

"Of what could I speak to her—at such a time?" he wistfully asked. The man in him shrank from thought of wooing when all her thoughts must be of her dying brother. The woman in Kate Ray saw that then, perhaps more than at any other time, there would be sweetness, strength, and support in the assurance that Daisy was loved and forgiven. Again was it Kate Ray who took matters into her own hands. Norman might slip away with only a few words to the family generally, but as to Daisy, that was another matter.

And so, just after nightfall, as, with sorrowing face and moistened eyes, he came to tell her he had just bidden Theodore farewell, and that Theodore had smiled and borne it bravely, Kate led him along the gallery of the big, old-fashioned southern house, past Mrs. Enyart's door, to the railing at the corner. "Wait here one moment, will you?" said she, and then disappeared.

It was a still December evening. The stars were sparkling in a cloudless sky. Out to the southwest, as he faced the valley, Old Lookout loomed like a big black bison against the lower heavens. Campfires flickered and twinkled everywhere at the front, and along the dim, shadowy ranges to the right and left. But distance softened all earthly sound, and a silence as of some New England wintry landscape fell like a mantle upon the freezing earth. On the floor below he could hear Bob Enyart thumping about his narrow room, and knew just how eager and restless that young soldier must be, but of other sounds close at hand there were few. The gallery on which he stood encircled the house on two sides, at least, and Theodore's room was at the northward end of the east front, well at his back. Kate had entered Mrs. Enyart's room, and every little moment Norman expected her return. She had asked him to take a small packet with him, but when she reappeared her hands were empty, her face was blank.

"It isn't—at least, I can't find something I want. Would you mind waiting while I run down stairs?" she asked. "I shan't be long." And,

wondering that their cool, level-headed Kate should appear so perturbed, Norman waited. He had left Daisy with her mother, had spoken briefly, gently, with them both, striving still to appear hopeful of seeing them all again when—when Theodore was able to move. He would write. He would never forget them. Mrs. Lane only wept. Daisy's little hand lay long in his, but their eyes hardly met as he bowed in farewell. He had dreaded that parting, yet how he longed to live it over, at least with her! And then, as Kate still failed to find the something she wanted on the lower floor (perhaps Bob Enyart was helping her now, smiled Norman to himself), he turned, began slowly pacing along the southern gallery, and became gradually aware of a slender, shadowy, girlish form leaning against the pillar at the further end, apparently gazing out at the dark and muddy street. Another instant and he knew it was Daisy—Daisy, enveloped in a shawl that muffled her head and shoulders, else must she have heard his step before she did, which was not until he strode within six feet of her. Then, startled, she turned and saw him, turned again, strove to flee, but in that instant, even in that dim light, he had seen the sweet, wan, piteous face was bathed in tears. Good God! What were doubts, scruples, resolutions now! One spring brought him to her side. One low-toned, intense, imploring cry, "Daisy!" One quick, impulsive, irresistible effort, and, despite counter effort, his arms had clasped, drawn, and held her to his breast, and then, listening despite herself to

HIS ARMS HAD CLASPED AND HELD HER TO HIS BREAST.

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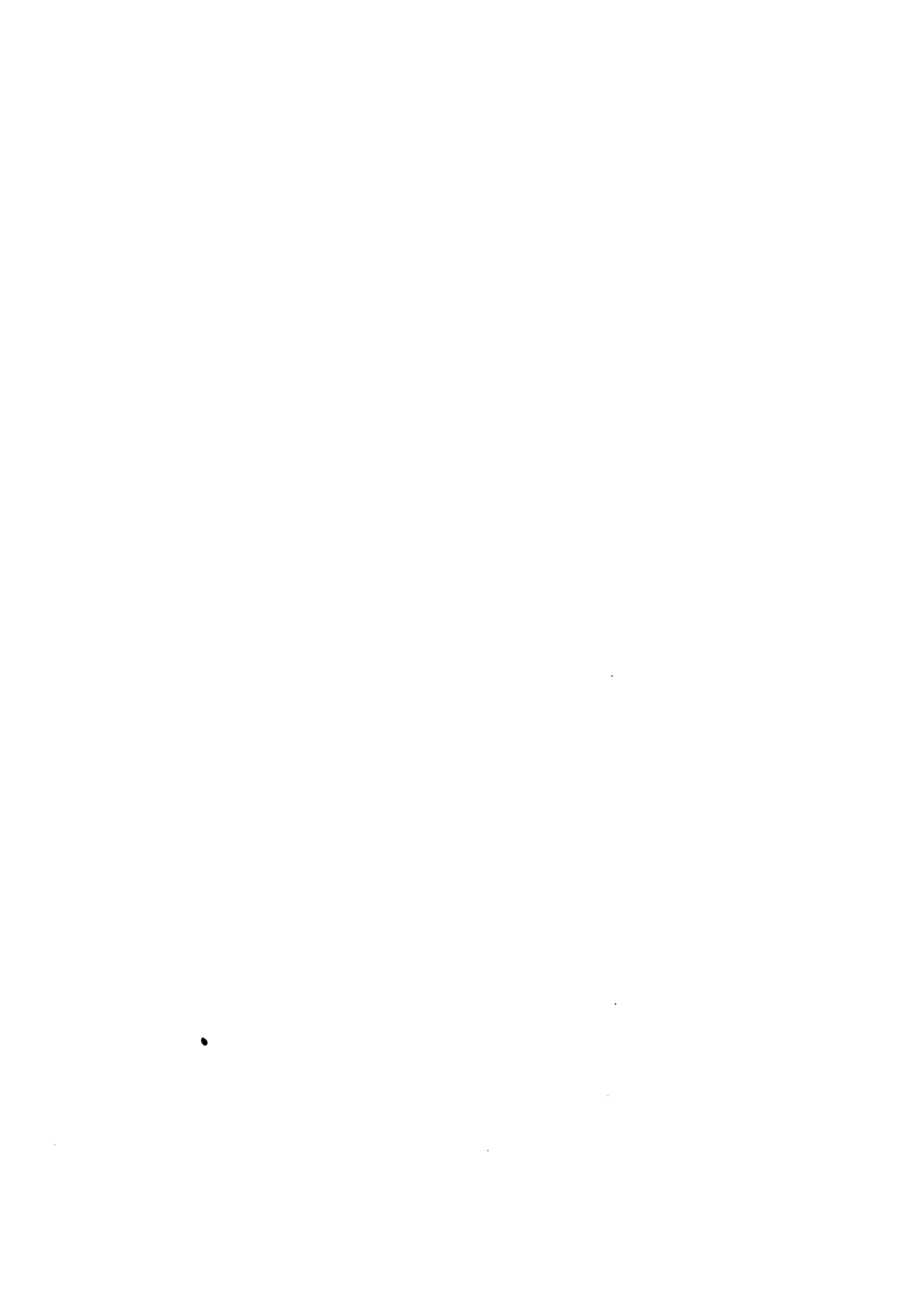

his fond, murmured words, yielding despite herself to the joy of his kisses, raining warm, passionate, pleading upon her rumpled hair, upon her forehead and temples, yielding at last to the infinite love in every word and touch and tone, with a sigh of relief inexpressible, of tearful content, of joy ineffable, the little head sank back into the hollow of that broad shoulder and the soft, sweet lips surrendered to his.

L'ENVOI

A sage has said "The story's told when the woman's won," so what excuse for further page save to bring the reader once more to Belleview and to another Christmas—just after the war. Only a pathetic reminder of the loved and hospitable homestead of the old days was Belleview now. But already hope was rekindling even in the sad eyes of the aging squire. One of his boys, his first-born, he might not see again, for to the last, through battle after battle, had Henry followed the fortunes of the cause he had so gallantly served, winning soldier honors everywhere, but, when the last plank floated out from under the sinking craft, proudly refusing to return to the state so divided against itself. It was then he joined hands with three or four of his comrades, and for the time, at least, was spending his days abroad. For this course there was perhaps another reason, long anticipated, in Kate Ray's final acceptance of General Bob Enyart's

hand and heart and fortune. "The best thing by long odds the war did for me," as he frequently declared, though its close found him a division commander and made him a major of regulars before he was out of his twenties. There was many a hard fight after Chattanooga, in which Buckeyes and what was left of our old friends, the Emmets, were prominent features, Gaffney coming in for more hard knocks than glory, yet sending his "missidges" and congratulations to Colonel Holt after the famous march to the sea, with every promise and intention of being up again in time to "drink down all comers to the wedding." It was a quiet little wedding that, the month that followed the muster out in the fall of '65. Norman was full colonel by that time and wearing the brevet title of General, but the world was to be faced over again. Malloy senior, a fugitive from justice, whose treachery had wrecked the life and honor of good old McIntyre, well-nigh beggared the Holts, and deeply involved the Lanes, had been brought up short in his career by the sudden appearance of Lane and Norman in Cincinnati shortly after Theodore's death. He might hoodwink Lane, but he couldn't bully Holt, and now that she had an arm to lean on, Daisy had told her lover of Malloy's whisperings, to the end that the whilom boss and manipulator had been made to disgorge not a little of his plunder before the clutch was off his throat.

For a few weeks Norman had wavered. The army would have to be reorganized and increased.

He was assured of a captaincy in the cavalry, but, looking at the desolation about the old homestead and in the dear old father's face, he made his choice. Enough had been recovered to repair and refurnish the mansion, but the old glories of the hunt and the stables would never come again. The darkies were "free niggers" now, and didn't know what on earth to do with themselves. Norman was busy looking after Belleview and the squire, with Daisy installed as mistress of the household, and yet ever in readiness to take Henry's place in the firm of Lane & Holt, should the elder decide against returning. When it was heard in the fall of '65 that Lorna Walton and her mother were gone abroad, it was whispered that he, at least, would not have to take to the law, provided he could forget his long love and console himself with the lady who "couldn't see what so many men seemed to see in Miss Ray."

But once more the great hickory logs blazed in the broad fireplaces. Harkless, and Hannibal, son of Harkless, were there with a host of the same old brood of aunties, uncles, and pickaninnies, only too glad to see a resumption of holiday joys, hopeful of "Christmas gifts," and, while proud of their freedom, only too eager, as a rule, to admit their dependence and entire willingness to be fed, clothed, and comforted by somebody else. Unc' Pomp and his fiddlers had wandered away; nor were there dancers galore as in the old days, nor crops, nor spurs, and hunting caps, nor foxes, masks, and brushes. These were gone

with successive occupants—"trophies," North and South. The glamour of the past was lifted from the walls of Belleview, but new blood was tingling in the veins—new ideas, new energy burning in the brains of Belleview's restorers, and stanch old friends had come to aid in the work—Dr. Woodrow and his Asholt patients among the foremost. Once again much of the old furniture stood in the same old nooks and corners. The portraits of bygone Holts reappeared on the walls; the books on the library shelves; sconces and candelabra, the massive old silver, the goblets so famous in the old festivities, even the old punch-bowl—even the incomparable punch, for, though thin and tremulous, the hand of the master was there to brew and the loved old squire doctor there to dispense.

And how joyous a gathering it was, despite the fact that no such toilets dazzled the eye as those that were worn that memorable Christmas eve in '60! Many a famous name was still represented. Many a uniform was still to be seen, blue and gray. There were several empty sleeves, and one gaunt, gallant son of the State came in on crutches—Wing of Paducah—and with him his sergeant, who rode with the foremost troop the night of the Belleview raid. How different the welcome now! And messages and "Merry Christmases" had come from Lieutenant-Colonel Gaffney, bedad, and Sergeant Connelly, still held to service with the Buckeyes, and a glowing message, too, from gallant Bob Enyart, away out in Texas with Sheridan, watching affairs along